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# Allegiances

**SUMMERCLAN**

Leader: **Summerstar** - golden-brown tom with white paws and blue eyes

Temporary deputy: **Sunshine** - bright yellow she-cat with fluffy fur and blue eyes

Deputy: **Silverlight** - silver she-cat with green eyes

Medicine cats: **Honeyleaf** - golden she-cat with green eyes

**Hawkfeather** - dark brown tabby tom with amber eyes

**Blossomleaf** - tortoiseshell she-cat with bright green eyes

**Morninglight** - gray-and-white she-cat with blue eyes

Warriors: **Lightningstrike** - bright yellow tom with amber eyes

**Oatfoot** - light brown tom with blue eyes

**Grassfeather** - tortoiseshell tom with amber eyes

**Thrushwing** - light gray tom with amber eyes

Apprentice, Squirrelpaw

**Shimmerpelt** - silvery she-cat with dark blue eyes

Apprentice, Shiningpaw

**Stoneclaw** - pure gray tom with amber eyes

Apprentice, Dewpaw

**Amberfrost** - bright orange she-cat with green eyes

Apprentice, Mousepaw

**Lightpelt** - white she-cat with blue eyes

**Sunnystep** - bright yellow she-cat with amber eyes

**Duskcloud** - gray tom with blue eyes

**Twilightmoon** - silver she-cat with hazel eyes

**Dawnfire** - bright orange she-cat with green eyes

**Twigbranch** - brown tabby she-cat with amber eyes

**Branchclaw** - dark brown tom with amber eyes

**Yellowtail** - pure gray tom with a long yellow tail and amber eyes

**Shadowflight** - pure black tom with white paws and amber eyes

**Mistypool** - blue-gray she-cat with blue eyes

**Riverfall** - blue-gray she-cat with green eyes

**Skyfeather** - whitish-gray tom with blue eyes

**Blackfoot** - pure white tom with jet black paws and amber eyes

**Dogtail** - brown tom with amber eyes

Queens: **Silverlight** – mother to Lightningstrike's kits: Ashkit, Brightkit and Stormkit

**Hopeheart** – mother to Shadowflight's kits: Frostkit, Windkit and Cloudkit

Elders: **Squirrelwhisker** - light brown tabby she-cat with blue eyes

**Petalsnow** - red-and-white she-cat with green eyes

**Smalltail** - yellow tom with a small tail

**AUTUMNCLAN**

Leader: **Mousestar** - gray tom with small ears

Deputy: **Clovertail** - white she-cat with amber eyes

Medicine cat: **Skytail** - white tom with beetle-black eyes

apprentice, Leafstreak

**SPRINGCLAN**

Leader: **Springstar** - tortoiseshell she-cat with green eyes

Deputy: **Violetflower** - purple-gray she-cat with pale blue eyes

Medicine cat: **Mottledpelt** - spotted black tom with a mottled pelt

apprentice, Fawnpaw

**WINTERCLAN**

Leader: **Snowstar** - pure white she-cat with dark blue eyes

Deputy: **Blizzardleap** - pale gray tom with blue eyes

Medicine cats: **Moonshine** - silver she-cat with blue eyes

**Nightfall** - black tom with pale yellow eyes

Cover art by @warriorcatlover345, it is completely AMAZING! I'm sure it's kind of obvious that it isn't my work haha!

# Prologue

Hawkfeather awoke in shimmering lush green forests and glanced around, looking for his former mentor, Honeyleaf, but did not see her. *It's a dream,* he thought, *and an important one*. He looked around for any of those starry StarClan cats, and did see one brown tabby tom approaching him. He wasn't a cat Hawkfeather recognized, so he certainly hadn't been one of those leaders or deputies or medicine cats that regularly visited him. Hawkfeather dipped his head politely but the tabby tom seemed indifferent to manners, and before he had even raised his head, the tabby tom began to speak.

"The snow-white cat will save you all," the tabby tom whispered, his voice carrying like the breeze.

"What? Is this a prophecy?" Hawkfeather demanded, all manners forgotten. It didn't sound like a prophecy - it was one sentence! "Why did you deliver it to me? What about Honeyleaf? She actually knows how to deal with things like this!"

The tabby tom faced him with a wry smile. "Who do you think is this cat?" he asked snidely.

Hawkfeather paused, thinking to himself. "It can't be an older warrior or this prophecy would've been long ago. Maybe one of the new kits... but, O Great Cat from a long time ago, two kits seem to fit this prophecy."

The tabby tom raised his eyebrows. "Two, you say. Well, that sounds disastrous. Naturally, both can be in the prophecy," he said, his voice heavy with sarcasm.

"So it's one of them!" Hawkfeather huffed in annoyance. "Tell me! Is it Frostkit or Cloudkit?"

The tabby tom smiled cruelly. "What do you think?"

"Well..."

"Think about that. We'll see each other again," the tabby tom meowed, already fading away along with StarClan's hunting grounds.

"Wait! What's your name? I don't want to keep calling you O Great Cat from a long time ago!" Hawkfeather burst out. It wasn't because he found that name disrespectful, but because he found it way too long to say. The tabby tom probably knew his reasons as well, but he just rolled his eyes and stepped forward next to Hawkfeather.

"My name is Earthstar," the tabby tom whispered. The name had a familiar ring to it, but Hawkfeather couldn't quite place it.

"Earthstar..." he murmured. Then he was jolted as he realized the hunting grounds were fading, and Earthstar was padding away. "Wait! I have so many more questions! Should this snow-white cat have any distinct personality?"

Earthstar looked back, giving that same wry smile as before, and faded away.

**Word count: 409**

# Chapter One

"Open your eyes, little one."

"Yeah! Hurry up!"

"Shush, Windkit."

"I've opened mine for *three days* now."

"Windkit. Let Frostkit take her own time."

*What's the hurry?* Frostkit wondered. She certainly agreed with the feminine voice, probably that of her mother. That Windkit, probably her brother, was horribly impatient. Still, should she open her eyes just to spite him? She already knew she wasn't going to like him. Obvious, wasn't it? Letting out an inaudible sigh, Frostkit blinked open her eyes. At first sight, she only saw a small gray kit and a silver she-cat.

"See! She just needed a little rushing!" Windkit growled. The silver she-cat cuffed his ear.

"Hello, Frostkit. I'm Hopeheart, he's Windkit, and that's your other brother, Cloudkit." the silver she-cat purred gently.

Frostkit looked over to the other part of the nest and saw a small white kit almost identical to herself curled up on that nest.

"Her eyes are blue like mine!" Windkit meowed triumphantly.

"Shush, you. They're only blue for a day, before they change into her real eye color," Hopeheart meowed with a long-suffering sigh.

Windkit growled in annoyance. "But Cloudkit's turned amber! I want someone to have my eyes! And yours are green!"

"My mother's were blue. And your father's are amber. So that means little Frostkit here might have my green eyes."

"Or they might be your father's color!" Windkit protested.

Hopeheart purred in amusement. "My father's are amber, too. True, she might be amber. Don't you know my father by now?"

Frostkit listened intently to their conversation, figuring out all the cats in the Clan. Hopeheart's mother, Lunarfur, was dead and gone a long time ago, barely after Hopeheart's birth, and her father, Grassfeather, was a grumpy, big tortoiseshell tom. Frostkit's father was a black tom called Shadowflight, who was on a hunting patrol at that moment and wasn't there to witness when his only daughter opened her eyes. She got a little huffy at that. Hopeheart spent every moment with them, so why couldn't Shadowflight? But she didn't think complaining was the way to go about it, since her mother was constantly cuffing her brother's ear and it looked like it might really hurt. For some reason, Hopeheart thought cuffing three-day-old kits was alright.

There were other boring and unimportant members of the Clan, too, but the most important were their denmates. Silverlight and her three kits, Ashkit, Stormkit, and Brightkit. Their litter was the opposite genders, one tom and two she-cats. Frostkit would've loved to have had a sister, but after a moon or so, Stormkit became like a sister to her, and Frostkit was seldom seen without her.

"BADGER! HELP! BADGER!" there was a shrill scream from inside camp. It wasn't a voice Frostkit recognized, probably some unimportant cat from the Clan, but the word 'badger' was terrifying. Frostkit considered jumping to hide, but she was an adventurous kit. She knew Windkit would never agree, he was too annoyed at her about everything, but maybe Cloudkit would?

Frostkit hurried over to her brother excitedly. "Cloudkit, do you want to jump on that badger and get a real badger ride?"

"Count me in!" Stormkit hissed from the side. The three kits grinned at each other and charged outside. Silverlight was standing at the entrance but she didn't have a chance to catch the three wily kits.

"What - no! Stormkit! You're four moons but those two are barely one moon old! And what are you doing out of the den? There's a

BADGER IN CAMP!" Silverlight roared, the horrifying deputy part of her emerging and submerging the gentle mother that she could be. Frostkit had been taught to hate Silverlight, since she'd apparently been Hopeheart's awful mentor, but she honestly didn't find Silverlight that bad. She was going to be leader someday, so Frostkit couldn't let hating Silverlight earn her a horrid place in the Clan.

Frostkit leapt onto the badger's neck, raking tiny claws across it. "BADGER RIDE! HURRY UP!" Stormkit yowled from the back. She and Cloudkit had just finished clambering on, and they all rode the badger around camp. The badger was distracted by the little creatures on its back that it hardly seemed to be paying attention to the fighting going on. The three kits jumped off the badger just as it let out a howl and charged out of camp where it had come from.

Frostkit, Cloudkit and Stormkit hurried back into the nursery and awaited punishment, but when they entered the nursery, it was like a ghost town. No kits, no queens. They hurried back outside to the High Rock, and saw Sunshine, the temporary deputy, standing up there.

"Summerstar is dead," the yellow she-cat meowed, her voice heavy with grief. "But... I was deputy when he fell. And Silverlight is still nursing. Which one of us is leader now?"

"You... you were only temporary, weren't you? So Silverlight should be leader," one of the cats gathered below, Amberfrost, meowed, her voice soft but clear.

Sunshine flinched. She obviously did want to be leader.

"Let's bring them both to Highstones. StarClan can tell us who is our next leader," Honeyleaf, the old medicine cat, let out a suggestion, but it really sounded more like a command. Both Sunshine and Silverlight nodded in agreement.

"But... I still have kits to care for. I can't just abandon them if I'm chosen to lead," Silverlight meowed hopelessly.

"You chose to have kits, you stupid cat," Honeyleaf snarled. "Now

deal with the consequences. You two, come on and quit dilly dallying. The rest of the Clan, what are you doing? Organize a burial, bury Summerstar, sit vigil, repair the camp, I don't know, do something and quit moping around!" Honeyleaf glared at everyone before charging out of camp with Sunshine and Silverlight trailing behind her.

Every cat in the Clan was busy with preparing the ground for burial and repairing the camp, and no cat seemed to remember the three naughty kits who had been riding the badger around for fun. No one noticed Frostkit, Cloudkit and Stormkit as they snuck back into the nursery. Only Silverlight had seen them go, and she was at Highstones, maybe getting her nine lives. So, they were actually safe, after doing something incredibly dangerous. But fun. And worth it.

It was nearly bedtime when they were approached by Windkit. "Stop bringing Cloudkit into your games. He doesn't deserve to be scolded along with you when Silverlight gets back. He's my acolyte, not yours."

"Acolyte? Ha! He's not my acolyte, he's my brother!" Frostkit spat. Seriously? Windkit saw Cloudkit as his acolyte? No way! Cloudkit wouldn't serve Windkit, or be constantly in his shadow, he was his own cat! How dare Windkit say Cloudkit was his acolyte?

"As am I. Your older brother who opened his eyes first. Listen to me, you weird purple-eyed cat!" Windkit growled.

Frostkit growled back. The real reason she hated Windkit was because when her eyes finally changed color, they didn't change to green. They changed to startling violet, nowhere in the family traits. He had constantly teased her for it while Stormkit had found them pretty. That was why she hated him. The constant unnecessary teasing that he provided. He did it all to gain more attention and put Frostkit in his shadow. Frostkit hated Windkit, loathed him.  How dare he say her nice, innocent brother was his acolyte!

"Okay, not acolyte," Windkit corrected with a sigh. "He's my apprentice."

"That's just worse," Stormkit groaned with an eyeroll. "Yes, you are a warrior, yes, he is not a kit,  he is an apprentice, and no, you're not littermates? Dude, what!"

Windkit sighed. "He. Is. My. Brother. And you are no sister of ours."

"I am your sister!" Frostkit fired back.

"By blood, maybe. But if I'm asked... I only have a brother."

Frostkit stared at Windkit in dismay, and then turned her back on him. "Well, if you say so, I won't care. I only have a brother, too."

Windkit's evil smile widened. "Oh, but Cloudkit only has a brother. You're excluded from both sides. Why don't you just accept it? You're not part of our family."

Frostkit looked at him, hurt, but found herself with no words to say. If they didn't want her to be their sister, then who was her family after all? She had few friends as it was. Frostkit turned away, her eyes darkening, only to find that awful medicine cat looking at her. What was his name again? Oh, Hawkfeather. He was always staring at either Frostkit or Cloudkit, muttering feverishly to himself, for no reason at all. He was way too young to be a psychopath already, but it seemed like he already was. Even his crabby mentor wasn't so crazy. Maybe he'd received a stupid prophecy about her and Cloudkit.

Hawkfeather realized she was staring straight back at him, confidently meeting his eyes, and he nervously turned away, his cheeks turning pink with embarrassment. Frostkit let out a huff of annoyance and bounded away to go find Stormkit. Stormkit was hanging out with her littermates as usual, and Frostkit couldn't help but feel a twinge of jealousy. If only she had littermates to hang out with, too, ones that didn't act like she didn't exist. Surprisingly, it barely took Stormkit a few moments to peel away from her littermates and come over to Frostkit.

"Were you arguing?" Frostkit asked suspiciously. Usually, it took Stormkit a lengthy explanation and a lot of excuses before Ashkit and Brightkit let her go off with Frostkit.

"Um. Not really. But I don't really like them. Never did. Was there something you wanted?" she asked, her voice trembling, but she still faced Frostkit with her kind eyes.

"My littermates are pretending I don't exist. They keep saying they only have a brother," Frostkit meowed sadly.

Stormkit looked sympathetically at Frostkit. "Don't worry. Even if you don't have blood siblings, I'll be your sister, alright? I've heard of this stuff before. We swear brotherhood."

"You mean, sisterhood."

"Yeah, sisterhood, sorry, it's brotherhood where I heard it from. We'll become sworn sisters. But you have to give me an item, and I have to give you an item. You have anything in mind?"

"I don't own anything, how about I we share prey today?" Frostkit asked. Everything she said was true. Usually, warrior cats didn't own anything, because everything they had was from or for the Clan. Like the prey they carried back to be eaten. The only thing personal was probably moss but that was constantly changed day in, day out.

"Well, that should work too," Stormkit meowed hopefully.

That day, they took a mouse back together, ignoring their siblings' confused and suspicious eyes on them, and quickly demolished it together. After that, they named themselves sworn sisters, and Frostkit knew she couldn't have been happier. Now she had a new sibling, a sister in Stormkit, and she'd never be alone again. She could tell from their facial expressions that her littermates didn't care what she was doing, but she noticed that Ashkit and Brightkit were staring darkly at the mouse bones that Stormkit was burying and they were muttering between themselves, green with envy. Why would they be envious? They were actually littermates with Stormkit, not just sworn siblings. Wasn't Frostkit's one worse? If anything happened, Stormkit still had actual siblings to turn to, but Frostkit never would, not again, not if Windkit kept ruining everything for her.

Surprisingly, Frostkit found that Hopeheart had gone on patrol. That was unusual, because usually queens stayed for the whole kithood before going on patrols and being a warrior again. Did that mean Hopeheart was sick and tired of caring for her pesky kits? She'd taken Shadowflight with her too... so perhaps they were abandoning... but they'd come back, surely. Even Stormkit was sure that they would come back, and if Stormkit - if her sworn sister believed it, so did Frostkit. Neither of her littermates were even speaking to her, and Frostkit wondered if she should mention that even if they weren't siblings anymore, Clanmates did speak to each other, if only occasionally. But Windkit was treating her like rotten prey, the kind that one avoided on their way across camp. The kind that no cat even bothered to bury until instructed by the Clan leader. That was her now. The rotten prey.

Would anything in her life, other than Stormkit, ever be right?

**Word count: 2030**

# Chapter Two

"Stormpaw! Ashpaw! Brightpaw!"

Barely any days had passed but the older kits were already becoming apprenticed. Frostkit knew she should be happy, but the more time Stormpaw spent training, the less time she had for Frostkit, and she was literally Frostkit's only friend. She was even orphaned now.

On that patrol that Shadowflight and Hopeheart had left on, they had all met a fox, which had cruelly slaughtered the entire patrol. Not a single cat had survived the fox attack, and now every cat in the Clan feared foxes more than anything. It had been one huge fox, with yellow fangs and a menacing expression. Frostkit knew it well. She'd had cats describe it to her over and over again. *One day, foxy, one day when I'm strong enough, I'm coming to find you, and it won't be a quick death.* Frostkit went forward to congratulate Stormpaw and her mentor, Twilightmoon. Ashpaw had been given to Duskcloud as an apprentice and Brightpaw to Dawnfire, all with fairly similar color schemes. But Stormpaw wasn't paying attention to Frostkit - she was yammering away with Twilightmoon. Frostkit let out a huff and left. She knew Stormpaw wasn't intentionally ignoring her, but she seemed to already be replacing her with her new mentor. Despite knowing it was all unintentional, Frostkit couldn't help but feel hurt by Stormpaw's actions. But she knew her sworn sister would apologize later. That was her way, anyway, and she'd never, ever hurt Frostkit in a way that could never be repaired before.

A few days back, both Silverlight and Sunshine had returned. One had been turned away by StarClan, renounced for refusing duty. That cat was Silverlight, Stormpaw's mother. Since she had renounced her duty to the Clan by having kits literally right after becoming deputy, StarClan refused to give her nine lives, and instead, the Clan was now lead by level-headed, kind, caring and wise Sunstar. She had lived many moons before Silverlight and was much more experienced anyway, so every cat in the Clan was

happier with the decision made. Not many cats liked Silverlight, basically only her family. Even Frostkit always winced whenever Silverlight crossed her path. She was a creepy cat, especially now that she was no longer deputy, always prowling around camp. When they'd returned with the poor news, Silverlight had stared up at Sunstar expectantly, as if expecting the yellow she-cat to name her deputy. It hadn't happened. Sunstar had named strangely named Stoneclaw had deputy. Stoneclaw was the son of Silverlight's sister, Lightpelt, a cat even more inexperienced than Silverlight. But every cat could see he was meant to be deputy, his voice strong and commanding, and he never faltered like he didn't know what to do, not like Silverlight. He was younger but more strong-willed, and more open to every cat's opinion. Every cat liked him, not like the way they'd despised Silverlight. Most cats now didn't even look at Silverlight. But most cats also remembered one thing: Sunstar had been Silverlight's mentor, and somehow Silverlight had still turned out horrible. Perhaps some cats couldn't be changed.

Stormpaw did come round. Right after Twilightmoon released her for bed, she immediately bounded over to Frostkit and apologized for ignoring her, but she said that Twilightmoon had been talking about really interesting stuff (Yes, only stuff. She didn't even SPECIFY), and she'd been so hooked into their conversation that she'd barely even heard anyone else except her mentor.

"I'm going to explore the territory tomorrow. Wanna come with me?" Stormpaw asked.

Frostkit cocked her head. "You're kidding, right? We'll get in trouble."

"And maybe we won't. Remember that time we got a real badger ride? Well, nobody scolded us then, did they?" Stormpaw asked, a sly smile on her face. She actually wanted Frostkit to join her on her territory tour, and she thought it could actually work. Wow. Honestly, Frostkit wanted to go too. Didn't all kits? They always wanted to start their apprenticeship earlier, oblivious to the consequences. And... yes. Frostkit did want that. To be an apprentice earlier, or maybe experience some things an apprentice did earlier.

Like exploring the territory.

"Guess I'll practice my silent stalking skills!" Frostkit meowed brightly. "Well, see you in the morning!"

"At *dawn,*" Stormpaw reminded her. "Will I need to wake you up?"

Frostkit thought for a moment, then nodded sheepishly. "Yeah, probably, but don't wake the big lumps of my not-siblings."

"They are your siblings," Stormpaw meowed. She always tutted whenever Frostkit described Windkit and Cloudkit as 'Clanmates' and not 'littermates'. But what she said was true. Frostkit didn't think she'd lied in her life, no matter how strange that sounded. She wouldn't lie about not going on the territory tour, either. She was on a never-lying streak, and she wasn't planning on breaking it. Windkit had lied dozens of times. Actually, even saying Frostkit wasn't his sister was a lie, wasn't it.

Before she could go to sleep, Windkit actually asked her to play a game with them. Frostkit stared at him, her mouth open with no words to say. "Me? Seriously?" she asked after a long moment.

"Yes, you, I don't reckon there are any Frostkits but you in any Clan at this point. Yeah, I know, right, you don't exist. But we need three players, so that's that. I invited the apprentices to play with us, too," Windkit meowed. He didn't exactly look pleased, anyway.

"Which ones? Stormpaw, Ashpaw and Brightpaw need to sleep before their-"

"Not them, Foolishness, although I probably should've played this game three days ago. I invited Dewpaw, Shiningpaw, Mousepaw and Squirrelpaw."

The four of them were still kind of depressed from their sister Hollypaw's death a few days ago, but they seemed jovial enough when they came to play the game. They were almost warriors, though, and the size of them! They could've squashed any of the kits. They were dividing into two groups, and they could already see that the four of them were grouping together, leaving the three

kits at one side.

"Wait. That's not how it works. I assign the teams," Windkit meowed. "After all, I'm Windstar, and I'm the SummerClan leader."

That immediately got some reaction. No cat wanted to be in any other Clan but SummerClan. All of the apprentices hurried to Windkit's side, leaving Frostkit alone on the other side, the SpringClan side.

"Game start! Oops, it's six versus one! How did I miss that!" Windkit said dramatically, although every cat knew it was on purpose. The four apprentices let out loud groans about how they'd been conned into this and it was such a waste of time.

"Quit it!" growled Windkit. "I'm Windstar, remember? You don't grumble in front of your leader. Frostmouse is the only survivor of SpringClan!"

"Wait!" Frostkit glowered at him. "You can't name me. I'm not in your Clan. My name is Frostlightning."

Windkit let out a howl of laughter. "Frostlightning! That's hilarious! But I honestly think Frostmouse is better. If not, we'll exclude you from the game."

"This is blackmail," Frostkit growled, annoyed with her brother, but she couldn't even do anything about it.

"My deputy is um, Dewpetal," Windkit made up.

"Dewpetal? That sounds like a girl!" Dewpaw said, annoyed.

"Um, Dewsky then," Windkit meowed. "And no more whining about it! I'm your LEADER! So get on with it! Organize patrols!"

**THE GAME**

Team One: SummerClan | Team Two: SpringClan
LEADER: Windstar ONLY
SURVIVING WARRIOR: Frostmouse DEPUTY: Dewsky

MEDICINE CAT: Squirreltail
WARRIORS: Cloudbelly
Mouseclaw
Shiningfur

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"ATTACK!" Windstar howled. (During the game, their game names will be used.)

"ACK! How am I supposed to defend myself? I literally am the only member of my Clan!" Frostmouse gasped.

"Can you just say your lines as practiced?" Windstar growled. Frostmouse rolled her eyes. Windstar had forced her to learn lines for the game. Well, it was hardly a game anymore! She was also meant to be bulldozed by Dewsky. It was no fun at all.

"Oh my StarClan, Windstar! Oh no, where are my Clanmates?" Frostmouse meowed dully. She hated those lines especially.

"Your Clanmates are dead! I killed them and now I'm here to kill you!" Windstar growled, baring his teeth.

"There will be no survivors," Dewsky growled.

"Oh, so bloodthirsty," Frostmouse sighed in resignation. "Alright, now you can bulldoze me and end the game, Dewsky."

"It's not a game!" Windstar snarled, and Frostmouse suddenly realized that in-game, no one could ever mention that it was a game. "Do you think I am here to play kit-games for kits?"

"You mean kit-games can be for other cats? Why do you need to mention it's for kits? Oh, right, because apprentices play kit-games too, isn't that right, Dewsky?" Frostmouse challenged.

Windstar looked like he was about to explode. "CAN YOU JUST SAY YOUR LINES PROPERLY! I WANT TO KICK YOU OUT OF THE GAME BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE FUN!"

"Rule One broken," Frostmouse noted easily. "You said it's a game, but of course it isn't, right? You've either killed my Clan for real, or

you're playing kit-games too... for *leaders.*"

"Just SAY YOUR LINES ALREADY!"

"This is so messed-up, I don't even know when I'm supposed to say my lines," Frostmouse meowed. "Anyway, I forgot them, problem solved."

"FROSTKIT!" Windstar growled.

"WindKIT, I thought you said my name was FROSTMOUSE." Frostmouse bellowed.

"It's an INSULT, stupid cat!" Windstar growled.

"Whatever, WINDKIT. I can insult as well."

Then, without warning, Frostmouse leapt on top of Windstar, unsheathing her claws and slashing across his face. It drew blood, and Dewsky cried, "Stop! This isn't real!"

"That's not what the game rules said," Frostmouse meowed devilishly, turning to attack Dewsky. Even the near-warrior couldn't keep up with her many advantages, size, speed, and just knowledge of every nook and cranny of the nursery. Frostmouse attacked at Dewsky.

"STOP!"

**End Game**

Frostkit looked around wildly. Who had called a stop? She hadn't wanted it to stop! Oh, wait, what? Why was Windkit's face bleeding? Wasn't it all fake, like a make-believe story or something? Perhaps not. Warriors were flooding into the nursery, and Sunstar stepped over to Frostkit. "Can I see you in my den?" she rumbled.

Frostkit wanted with all of her heart to challenge her leader and refuse, but she wasn't that strong. She couldn't flat-out refuse her leader, not yet. She was too weak and not in a high enough position anyway. She dipped her head politely and followed Sunstar into her den.

"Did you hurt your brother?" Sunstar asked quietly.

She wasn't even telling a lie when she said, "No."

"Don't lie to me, Frostkit," Sunstar meowed quietly.

"I don't have a brother," Frostkit meowed, "so it isn't a lie. Did I injure Windkit? Yes, I did, but he isn't my brother."

"Frostkit, I didn't realize your relationship with your siblings was so serious."

"What, you mean sibling? I only have a sister. Stormpaw. My sworn sister, actually," Frostkit meowed casually, then quickly put her paws over her mouth. "Oops. Sorry. That was rude."

Sunstar nodded kindly. "Don't worry. I don't bite. But you injured a Clanmate."

She had given up on the brother thing, for which Frostkit was grateful. "We were playing a game."

"So serious that you wanted to attack him?" Sunstar asked, looking horrified.

"No! Not like that. I mean, we were in opposite Clans in that game. And Windkit didn't put any cats on my team! He took Cloudkit and all four of the apprentices for his team. I had to fight back," Frostkit meowed.

"You fought down a fully-trained apprentice, Frostkit. Now we're even considering postponing Dewpaw's ceremony. But he's a very talented apprentice. It was you, wasn't it? You're the one who's abnormally good. He has prior training, but you have skill," Sunstar meowed. Was that a compliment? Frostkit nodded shyly, quietly accepting.

"You may go. Don't injure anyone in your Clan again," Sunstar meowed swiftly, and then let Frostkit out of her den.

Frostkit didn't end up sleeping in the nursery that night. She slept in the grassy patch right outside, because neither Windkit nor Cloudkit

would allow her in. Frostkit closed her eyes, missing Stormpaw's warmth and missing the nursery in itself. She knew it was going to be a restless sleep, and she was supposed to be getting up to go on the territory tour with her sworn sister. Somehow, she knew that wasn't going to happen. If she got into trouble again, it would be catastrophic, and somehow, she just didn't want it.

**Word count: 2019**

# Chapter Three

"Hey! Wake up!" Big, heavy gray paws batted at Frostkit's chest, hind legs, paws, everywhere on her body. Frostkit groaned awake, her eyelids fluttering open weakly. This was really early. Like, really, really early, but she could vaguely remember asking some cat to wake her up at dawn to tag along with an apprentice's territory tour. Sure enough, it was Stormpaw who was prodding her, her big round blue eyes fixated on Frostkit's violet. "Good, you're awake!" Stormpaw meowed brightly, leaping off Frostkit with a grin on her face. "Twilightmoon's almost ready to take me, by the way. So, are you coming or not?" With that eager grin on her face and her easygoing smile, how could anyone refuse her? Sure, Frostkit was tired, dreadfully tired, in fact, from the game the previous night and then the scolding from Sunstar, but she just couldn't turn down her sworn sister. Frostkit nodded slightly.

"Yes!" Stormpaw whispered eagerly. "You're so much easier to get now you're outside. Sleep out here more often, won't you?" There was a teasing light in her eyes, and she looked at Frostkit with sibling love.

Frostkit rolled her eyes. "It was cold. And I miss Hopeheart." Her eyes wandered for a moment, thinking about her mother's soft, silky, silver fur, and how her father would drop by the nursery every day to cuddle them a little, and how they'd all play games together. All it had taken was one fox to drive that all apart. And she'd never forgive that yellow-fanged, red-eyed fox. That was all she knew about it. Since it had slaughtered a patrol of six cats, no cat in the Clan had thought to track it down. They thought they would merely get killed as well, and Sunstar didn't seem to want to convince them. Being the levelheaded cat she was, she probably thought that avoiding the fox was a better idea than killing it. What about revenge? But no cat here ever thought about revenge. It was odd, that the heart of a little four-moon-old kit would be more vengeful than the hearts of sixty-moon-old Sunstar, who had seen many battles in her day.

"Hopeheart... you'll see her again, Frostkit. Someday," Stormpaw promised.

Frostkit looked away, her eyes wandering. She didn't think so, but if her sworn sister wanted to believe it, she could, too. Though she didn't believe it with all her heart. She hastily followed Stormpaw to go find Twilightmoon, carefully keeping out of sight. Hopefully, none of her littermates would think to look for her.

Just before they could set off, there was a loud scream. It was sunrise by then, because Twilightmoon had taken an incredibly long time to wash her paws, and they saw every cat crowding around the medicine den. Silverlight's terrified silver face was right at the front of it all, Lightningstrike by her side.

"What is wrong with her?" Silverlight gasped, her voice a shrill scream that echoed around camp. The cats crowding around the medicine den squeezed together more to try and get a closer look.

"She's in a coma, probably getting a seriously important vision, will you shut up!" Honeyleaf snarled, throwing Silverlight backwards into the crowd with terrifying force. The former deputy let out a squawk of fury and leapt on top of the experienced medicine cat, grappling with her, claws unsheathed. It was a strange but horrifying sight, one definitely not seen every day. A warrior attacking a medicine cat with unsheathed claws? Every cat knew Silverlight wasn't the most levelheaded cat - in fact, she was probably the most hotheaded - but they would never have guessed that she'd attacked Honeyleaf of all cats. Cats had started to back away, and Frostkit moved in closer to get a better look at the fight. There was a quiet desperation in Honeyleaf's eyes. Of course - she didn't know how to fight. Technically, neither did Frostkit. But as she unsheathed her own tiny claws, she remembered something. She'd fought down fully-trained Dewpaw. Of course, that didn't mean anything - she might still lose to Silverlight. But if she stepped in, the measly orphaned kit, then maybe some other cat might step up to stop Silverlight. The only cat who remained close was Lightningstrike, Silverlight's mate, who probably wouldn't dare attack his love. Frostkit narrowed her eyes and clenched her teeth. This was not going to be an easy fight. Who would submit first? She lowered herself into a crouching position and was just about to leap

into the fight when Honeyleaf's scream was cut short and she hit the ground with a soft thud. Frostkit froze mid-leap and crashed to the ground behind Lightningstrike.

Lightningstrike glanced back at her, but of course she was just a crazy kit and he didn't need to take notice of her. Frostkit crept delicately to Honeyleaf's side and sniffed the medicine cat gently, feeling around for signs of life. Her body was still warm, but she herself was far gone. Frostkit let out a small sob. Honeyleaf had served her Clan well for moons, and just because she'd proclaimed that Blossomleaf was in a coma, Silverlight had killed her.

"You MONSTER!" Frostkit turned on Silverlight and leapt upon her, unsheathing her claws and slashing across Silverlight's face, drawing blood. Of course, she knew that if Silverlight landed a hit, she was stronger and her claws were longer than Frostkit's. However, she had to try. She had to avenge the death of the Clan's faithful medicine cat, who had never deserved to have been killed like this. Why, then? Why did she have to die, just because Silverlight was mad? "You killed our medicine cat, Silverlight!"

"She's not dead!" Hawkfeather called. He was bent over Honeyleaf, pressing herbs onto her. "She'll live. But Silverlight, why?"

"She was going to kill my DAUGHTER!" Silverlight screamed back, slashing at Frostkit with a murderous gleam in her eyes. "And if you won't step down, maybe I'll be responsible for killing a KIT! But who would care? Nobody powerful loves you." Frostkit saw the intention. She was goading Frostkit. But all she said was true. Even if Frostkit died, the Clan would mourn the loss of a kit, that was all. Stormpaw would be devastated, but Stormpaw wasn't exactly someone very important, whose opinion would matter greatly. Her opinion didn't matter much. Not like Silverlight's. Despite everyone's hate for her, Silverlight's opinion was still very impactful, and as the former deputy, she could get away with a lot of things. But would the Clan let her get away with murdering a helpless kit? Frostkit wouldn't consider herself helpless, but the Clan must see her that way.

"She was going to do NO SUCH THING, you HORRID, MISINTERPRETING cat!" Frostkit screamed, her voice as shrill as

Silverlight's. "She said Blossomleaf was in a COMA, that's ALL! What did she DO TO HER? NOTHING! AND YOU KILLED HER WITH NO REASON! YOU SHOULD BE EXECUTED FOR MURDERING A CLANMATE!" Frostkit howled, her voice dangerous. She hadn't realized Honeyleaf was still alive. But naturally, Silverlight wouldn't be scared of a tiny kit. She leapt atop Frostkit and threw her out of camp into the canyon. Well, what used to be a canyon. After a recent flood, it had become more of a small freshwater lake. Great for soaking moss and drinking, sure, but not for escaping from. Frostkit wailed in terror as the current carried her downstream... it was going to bring her to the pine forests. To...

AutumnClan's territory. And SummerClan was on incredibly bad terms with AutumnClan at the moment. Frostkit's mother, Hopeheart, had personally killed their previous leader, Fallingstar, all nine times, and their current leader was Mousestar, Fallingstar's mate. They wouldn't be happy seeing a kit bobbing up onto their lands. And of course, the lake could carry her down past their territory. No cat knew what lay past AutumnClan's territory, except for Twolegplace, but if Frostkit was swept far enough, she'd meet a waterfall, where she'd perish.

But she was swept in a different direction, down to SpringClan's territory. Frostkit heaved a sigh of relief. Springstar was incredibly friendly, one of the original leaders. The last of them, in fact. She was one of the founders. The others had all died. Summerstar had died leaving Sunstar to lead them, Autumnstar had died, then Fallingstar had died, and now Mousestar was leading AutumnClan, and Winterstar had perished leaving Snowstar to lead his Clan.

"Berrypaw! Streampaw! Are you paying attention to your territory tour, or not?" Frostkit heard an annoyed but kindly voice ask.

"I'm pretty sure there's a kit floating on the water, Icepool!" one of the apprentices announced boldly. She was a silverish she-cat with blue eyes, probably Streampaw. The other tortoiseshell must be Berrypaw.

"Don't be ridiculous. We don't have any kits in the Clan. You were the last, remember? What color is it?"

"I think it's white." Berrypaw had a much deeper voice, and it was only then that Frostkit realized that he was a tom, not a she-cat.

"White? Preposterous! Fine, we'll take a look." A white cat appeared, stepping gingerly past the ferns. She gasped when she saw Frostkit bobbing helplessly in the water,  leapt in and fished her out. At first, Frostkit mistook her for a WinterClan cat. Who else swam? Although she smelled like SpringClan, she had sleek fur like a WinterClan cat, and the suffix 'ice' was usually used in WinterClan. Icepool too - Ice and water.

Frostkit shivered weakly on the ground. It was so cold. The lake was already freezing when Silverlight tossed her in, but now that she was out, it was even colder. She looked up at the SpringClan cats with nervousness in her eyes. Were they going to injure her, or do something to her? Perhaps they'd take her to Springstar, and that wouldn't be nearly as bad. Springstar was a fair leader, and at least she'd hear Frostkit out or something, then she wouldn't be killed.

"You're a kit," Streampaw meowed in fascination, like it was a glorious thing to be a kit.

"I'm almost an apprentice. I'm four moons old!" Frostkit responded brightly. She only wished she could've followed Stormpaw on her territory tour. She'd probably left with Twilightmoon already. "You're probably wondering why I was in the lake. Silverlight attacked Honeyleaf and I jumped in to stop her." The good thing was that Silverlight and Honeyleaf were both well-known cats in SummerClan, so it saved Frostkit all the 'who's that?' comments. Only Berrypaw was looking slightly confused, but he nodded understandingly after a quick whisper from his sister. Icepool stared down sympathetically at Frostkit.

"Do you want me to take you back to your territory?" Icepool asked. "You're young to have already experienced the outside of your territory. I mean, most cats don't experience entering the territory of other Clans, and you're still a kit!" Amusement gleamed in her eyes, and she didn't look hostile at all. Perhaps because the trespasser was a kit, so she wasn't as harsh?

"Yes, please," Frostkit meowed politely, dipping her head to Icepool.

She was still trying to conceal her burning anger at Silverlight. Had Honeyleaf really died? Frostkit was almost one hundred percent sure she had. She'd seen the old medicine cat spasm on the ground and then lay still, so she was definitely dead. Frostkit had no idea why none of her other Clanmates had jumped in to help. She knew Hawkfeather didn't know how to fight, and Lightningstrike would never attack Silverlight, but so many of their Clanmates had been crowding around, just watching their helpless medicine cat get slaughtered! What kind of Clanmates were they? Frostkit flicked her tail in irritation, knowing there was nothing more she could've done.

"Hey, stop daydreaming!" Streampaw gave Frostkit a light cuff on the ear, amusement in her eyes. "Icepool wants to lead you back to your territory now."

"Oh. I thought you'd take me to Springstar first because I'm a trespasser," Frostkit mumbled shyly. Streampaw just let out a short laugh.

"Take a kit trespasser to Springstar! Bwahaha! Like we would! We'll have a word with Silverlight, obviously, but you didn't do anything wrong," Streampaw meowed gently. "Do you want me to carry you?" She bent down to pick Frostkit up by her scruff, but Frostkit dodged away, panic flashing in her eyes.

"No, thank you!" Frostkit meowed hurriedly. She didn't like it when any cat except Stormpaw touched her. She was sensitive in that way. She could see Streampaw was just looking plain confused, because she'd had very good intentions. But after a few days of fighting, Frostkit wouldn't just let any old cat pick her up, especially some cat she didn't know.

Icepool led Frostkit all the way back to SummerClan territory. Frostkit's paws were incredibly sore, and she knew Streampaw was watching her with a concerned expression, but she still held her head high and walked proudly past the border, her eyes set on the lush green forests of SummerClan.

"Hey! Is that Frostkit? Frostkit!" some cat called.

Frostkit looked up and ran towards the voice. It was a border patrol comprising of Sunstar, Grassfeather, Thrushwing and Squirrelpaw. They all bounded towards her like they actually cared about her. Frostkit paused mid-run, remembering. Cruel thoughts slid across her mind. She knew her Clanmates didn't care about her. If her own brothers didn't and renounced their ties with her, why would her Clanmates be any different? But they were coming towards her with warm, relieved eyes, and Frostkit couldn't find the anger in her to refuse them and run away. Where would she go, anyway? She had no where to flee, and here... Stormpaw was here.

"Yes, it's me," she meowed, probably more relieved than all the cats in the border patrol combined. She was home, safe and sound, and, although a little cold and sore, safe and unharmed. "Has Silverlight been dealt with?" She narrowed her eyes at Sunstar, uncaring that it was a rude gesture. She needed to know if their medicine cat's murderer, the cat who'd also tossed a kit into the lake, was still happily going about SummerClan unpunished.

"She is doing the elder's ticks, changing everyone's bedding, and sleeping out in the cold at night," Sunstar meowed smoothly, like that was a great punishment.

Frostkit stared at her in horror. "But that's the kind of punishment you'd give naughty apprentices! Silverlight killed Honeyleaf, and she tossed me into the lake! I could have died if the SpringClan cats hadn't found me! Shouldn't she be exiled?" Her voice shook as she spoke, but she truly believed with all of her heart that Silverlight deserved to be exiled and never seen ever again. She should die out in the cold, without her Clan, without her mate, without her kits. That would be the best, cruelest punishment to give her.

"Oatfoot, Hopeheart, Shadowflight, Dawnfire, Yellowtail and Mistypool died to that fox a quarter-moon ago," Sunstar meowed. "We lost so many Clanmates. I can't afford to exile any warriors. I know Silverlight totally overreacted, but she just lost one of her daughters recently, and she loved Mistypool a lot, possibly the most. Her kind, level-headed daughter, the splitting image of herself. Since then, she's gotten more protective of her other children, and of course she wouldn't want to know that Blossomleaf was in a coma and she'd never talk to her again. Anyway, Honeyleaf

didn't die. She's still alive, it was a shallow wound that will heal."

"OH. Okay. Wait, *was* in a coma?" Frostkit asked quizzically. "You mean, she's okay now? She woke up? That's a really short coma."

Sunstar shook her head sadly. "No, she did not wake up. She died, after bringing to us one word from StarClan. 'Unite.'"

"Unite?" Frostkit asked, rolling her eyes. "That's ridiculous. SeasonClan separated for a reason! And Springstar's literally still alive! Why would she unite her Clan? They split apart because of sibling rivalries!"

"And now those siblings are dead, Frostkit. Please listen to me. Stop being so rebellious. I understand why you jumped in to stop Silverlight, but you're just a kit, and you gravely wounded her. Did you know that? That's why her punishment is lighter. Frostkit, you've scarred her face beyond repair. She'll always have three slash marks down her face, crossing her eyes. You've given one of our warriors a mark that every cat will see, and she will be embarrassed forever because she was wounded by a kit." Sunstar met Frostkit's eyes. They were gleaming dangerously, like she didn't approve of Frostkit jumping in to help their helpless medicine cat. Frostkit had been untrained, too, but she couldn't just stand there and watch Honeyleaf get slaughtered! She hadn't died after all but she might have! She met Sunstar's eyes defiantly, knowing she had done absolutely nothing wrong and she was not going to back down.

"Is she really alive?" Frostkit asked instead. She hadn't expected her to have survived.

"She came close to it, and isn't in any state to help any cat right now. She's sleeping peacefully but not dead thank StarClan. There's no need to be too mad at Silverlight, she acted on impulse. She has always had anger issues, and I believe that Honeyleaf's near death may open her eyes to this," Summerstar meowed calmly.

"You should exile her. Every cat would want you to exile her! I wouldn't be comfortable sleeping in the same camp as an almost-murderer!" Frostkit spat. She almost unsheathed her claws and attacked Sunstar but she remembered faintly that her leader was

not the enemy, and despite how hotheaded and rebellious she was, she was not going to attack her Clan leader. That would be unforgivable and would get her exiled! She stared up at Sunstar expectantly.

"No, I'm not going to exile her. We need Silverlight, Frostkit, regardless of what you may think. She is a good warrior, only slightly crazy with losses. Mistypool and now Blossomleaf. She treasures her daughters, but now she has only Riverfall, Brightpaw and Stormpaw from her five daughters." Sunstar looked like she was feeling Silverlight's loss, but that only made Frostkit narrow her eyes suspiciously.

"Whatever you say," Frostkit meowed, dipping her head politely to Sunstar. "But I'm not going to treat Silverlight with respect anymore. From now on, she is lower than dirt to me. If she orders me to do something, I will not obey unless I want to." She met Sunstar's resigned eyes rebelliously.

"Fine."

Frostkit almost froze in shock. Fine? Sunstar was fine with it? She could treat Silverlight like a newborn kit now! That was... actually funny.

Frostkit smiled up at her leader, and together, she and the border patrol headed back to camp.

**Word count: 3107**

**Sorry about the five-day wait, or six days. I kept postponing writing because I was tired.**

# Chapter Four

Frostkit slowly padded back into camp. It was nightfall by then, and every cat was asleep. She settled into her little nest just outside the nursery, hoping with all of her heart that that night, StarClan would send clear skies and no rain. If it rained, she'd either get drenched or be forced to enter the nursery, and that would be a dreadful disaster. None of the kits would be accepting, since the only two were her totally not-brothers. They didn't bat an eye when she came back, poked her head into the nursery and found them wide awake. There was no welcoming greeting, only a cold, emotionless stare saved just for her, and Frostkit sighed disappointedly, wondering what on earth she had been hoping for from her stupid siblings, and went outside again to sleep. No warrior had objected to her sleeping outside, so she supposed that was awfully normal for rebellious kits like her. She just wished two moons would pass quicker. Once she was an apprentice, she would finally be with Stormpaw again after two long moons. Then she'd have her sister back and they could train together! Well, obviously Stormpaw would be miles ahead. Frostkit gave a slight purr of amusement, then remembered she'd promised Stormpaw she'd join her on the territory tour, and she'd never made it in the end. She wondered if her sworn sister had been constantly glancing over her shoulder, expecting a little ball of white fluff to pop out and say hello.

The next two moons were awfully uneventful for Frostkit and her not-brothers, as kits were generally ignored in the Clan, plus they didn't have parents, so no one was attracting anybody to come to the nursery. They didn't starve, obviously, because the apprentices brought them prey. Frostkit always savored that moment when Stormpaw came, bringing a juicy mouse in her jaws. They'd share prey if Stormpaw was freer, and Frostkit could see how Stormpaw actually cherished their friendship. Ever since Dewfrost, Squirreltail, Mousewhisker and Shininglight had become warriors, Stormpaw's sister Brightpaw had been mooning over Dewfrost and Ashpaw was mooning over Shininglight.

"We're too young for love!" Stormpaw meowed in annoyance as she saw Brightpaw padding behind Dewfrost as he trotted to the fresh-kill pile. "And what does  Brightpaw see in that arrogant furball? Do you know how long she boasts about him, and he boasts about himself?" Stormpaw flicked her tail in irritation, expecting Frostkit to understand the woes of being an apprentice and having moony siblings.

"Dewfrost certainly has an ego," Frostkit agreed. That was all she deemed safe to say. Anything nice about Dewfrost would probably lead to Stormpaw being angry at her for a while. Stormpaw was kind, but she wasn't the most levelheaded cat around. She lost her temper easily, and could be angry for long periods of time, though not against Frostkit. Stormpaw could never stay angry against her sworn sister, but she also pored out her worries and anger against other cats to Frostkit a lot of the time, leaving Frostkit's head buzzing with all the stuff for grown cats.

"Isn't today your apprentice ceremony?" Stormpaw asked suddenly, her annoyed expression replaced by pure happiness and excitement.

"Oh, right, it is!" Frostkit jumped to her paws and ran down to the High Rock, feeling Stormpaw running behind her, the breeze ruffling through their fur. They stopped right below the High Rock and saw Sunstar leaping onto it. The yellow-furred leader purred in amusement when she saw Frostkit all posh and ready for her apprentice ceremony.

"You're so eager, aren't you! Where are your brothers?" Sunstar asked. She was always asking things like that, where's your brothers, where's your siblings, as if she expected that to make Frostkit suddenly reconcile with Windkit and Cloudkit.

Frostkit looked innocently back. "I don't have any brothers," she meowed breezily, and Stormpaw tapped her lightly with her tail. Stormpaw had warned Frostkit not to mention that too much around grown cats, but she couldn't help it. It seemed nice to keep on saying she didn't have any brothers.

Sunstar sighed in disappointment, before seeing Windkit and Cloudkit running at full-speed, which wasn't very fast, to the High

Rock, their chins high. Her brow furrowed when the two of them crashed into the bottom of the High Rock. "Are you alright?" she asked, sounding mildly concerned.

"My chin," Cloudkit groaned, getting up weakly from where he'd fallen. He helped Windkit up, both of them looking dazed. Frostkit rolled her eyes and smirked slightly. Those stupid kits.

"Why did we have to run like that?" Windkit grumbled, and Cloudkit glared at him and fired back, "It was your idea, not mine! Don't blame me like you always do!" *Like you always do?* Frostkit wondered. Was Cloudkit abused by Windkit? Perhaps she should admit that she had one brother, if that would make him happy. As far as she was concerned, Cloudkit had never done anything bad to her except to choose Windkit over her. He was probably regretting that now.

"Hush, kits, groom your fur, quick!" Sunstar meowed in a hurry. Stormpaw had already groomed Frostkit's fur for her. Usually, the mothers did that, but since Hopeheart was dead, as well as Shadowflight, there was no cat to groom their fur for them. *I'll get you, foxy, because it's your fault my parents are gone!* Frostkit screeched inwardly.

The Clan was already filing in under the High Rock, looking proudly down at the three kits whom they had done nothing to help raise. Frostkit flattened her ears, almost baring her teeth when she saw Silverlight come over. Silverlight gave Stormpaw a small wave, and even Stormpaw looked indifferent to her mother. She lifted her chin high and stared into the distance. She had been doing that lately, avoiding Silverlight at all costs. Even Silverlight's other kits were avoiding their mother. Skyfeather was extremely nervous about it, skirting at the side every time Silverlight passed, and Riverfall could literally walk straight past her mother with an indignant expression on her face. Silverlight had the nerve to look hurt by this. She'd literally killed a medicine cat, and she didn't think her Clanmates would be wary of her?

"We have come here to celebrate that three of our kits have reached the age of six moons, and are ready to be apprenticed," Sunstar meowed warmly. "Windkit, Cloudkit and Frostkit, step forward."

The three of them obliged, Windkit and Cloudkit huddling close together. Frostkit fixed her gaze on Stormpaw's smiling face and smiled back. "Windkit, Cloudkit and Frostkit, from this moment onwards you will be known as Windpaw, Cloudpaw, and Frostpaw. Windpaw, your mentor will be Riverfall. Yellowtail trained you well, although he is no longer with us." A distant expression crossed Sunstar's face, but it was gone in an instant. "I trust you will pass down all the skills you have learnt to Windpaw. Cloudpaw, you will be mentored by Lightpelt. Lightpelt, you received excellent training from Oatfoot, who is sadly no longer with us, and I trust you will pass down the same skills to Cloudpaw. Frostpaw, your mentor will be Silverlight. Despite the recent disagreements, Silverlight is a good warrior and I believe I have trained her well. She has also trained Amberfrost and Hopeheart, who is sadly no longer with us, and I trust she will pass down the same skills to Frostpaw."

Silverlight bent down to touch noses with Frostpaw, but Frostpaw instinctively cringed away and unsheathed her claws, raising them to the exact location of the scars crisscrossing across her upper face, the place where Frostpaw had scarred her before. Silverlight moved backwards, her eyes narrowing to slits. Frostpaw could tell: Silverlight wasn't any happier about this arrangement than she was. Frostpaw didn't want to be mentored by a murderer, and Silverlight didn't want to mentor the cat who had scarred her and ruined her beauty for life.

"I refuse to be mentored by a murderer!" Frostpaw snarled, her unsheathed claws scraping the earth. The entire Clan gasped, the sound radiating through Frostpaw's ears. However, she did not back down. She was not going to be mentored by Silverlight and that was that. "Please change my mentor," she meowed to Sunstar. Even the leader was looking revolted by the very idea and annoyed that Frostpaw had spoken up.

"Frostpaw, I have been lenient with you in the past but you cannot choose your own mentor!" Sunstar snarled, her own claws starting to unsheathe. She probably wouldn't attack, but that was a sign of anger, and Sunstar didn't usually get angry. Still, Frostpaw faced her with a defiant expression on her face.

"I don't want to choose my own mentor. I just want you to pick a

mentor for me who isn't a murderer!" Frostpaw snarled, her voice echoing around. "Will you?" she added, her voice softening to more of a plea, hoping that would seem more polite. "Will you please pick a new mentor for me? I don't feel safe with Silverlight. I can't even turn my back on her because I'm so scared." She faced Sunstar with pleading eyes.

"I don't really want to mentor her either, Sunstar," Silverlight meowed, her voice heavy. "I am grateful that you are presenting me with such an honor, but she scarred me beyond healing, as a kit. What might she do with the right training?"

"Be a great asset for the Clan?" Frostpaw asked hopefully. She looked to both Sunstar and Silverlight, but neither of them were looking at her.

"You have to mentor her. I asked you to. I chose you for the job, when everyone wants me to exile you!" Sunstar hissed. Her eyes were slits now, and she looked really angry for the first time ever. This was obviously an old argument and they probably hadn't gotten along very well even as apprentice and mentor. The malice in Silverlight's eyes showed that they'd never liked each other, not ever.

"Then exile me. No one likes me anymore," Silverlight hissed, glowering at Sunstar. "All I did was protect my daughter and my other children hate me now. Lightningstrike won't speak to me. Just exile me or kill me. It's all for the better, Sunstar. You have to understand. I don't care if you need your warriors. You have this new batch, don't you?" She gestured wildly to Frostpaw, Cloudpaw and Windpaw. "Look at them all, so ready-made. Don't tarnish her reputation by putting me as her mentor. Although, her reputation is already bad. Attacking a Clanmate?" A smirk slid onto her face and she ruffled her paw past her scar. "See this? That one is a monster. She needs a innocent cat to train her, not me. Not the one she hates." Silverlight stared out at the crowd of cats watching their conversation in awe. "Sunstar has spoken! Frostpaw's new mentor will be Squirreltail."

Sunstar didn't even disagree, for one. She nodded and let Squirreltail approach and touch noses delicately with Frostpaw,

eyes eager. Frostpaw didn't know that much about Squirreltail, but at least she wasn't evil. Still, that evil gleam in Silverlight's eyes seemed to say something - that she'd chosen Squirreltail for a reason, and it probably wasn't a good reason for Frostpaw.

Still, the next few days were relatively peaceful, with Squirreltail teaching Frostpaw how to stalk and hunt prey. Hunting wasn't exactly her specialty - she missed all three of the mice Squirreltail had set her to catch. But the moment she was deemed 'okay' and they moved on to battle training, Frostpaw swept the floors with Squirreltail, practically destroying her mentor in the fight. Squirreltail was literally struggling against her brand new apprentice and annoyance was shining in her eyes.

"Your technique is all wrong," Squirreltail spat. "Were you even listening when I thought you? You have to fluff out your fur, and bunch your hind legs before you jump!"

"However," Frostpaw meowed, a malicious gleam in her eyes, "I still won, and that's what matters. You can inconvenience yourself by fluffing out your fur and making yourself seem bigger than you are, but it's better if you flatten your fur to your body and seem small. You wouldn't want to catch your super fluffed-out fur on a tree or something, would you?" Frostpaw asked, sticking out her tongue. She didn't care if she was being disrespectful. Squirreltail was a horrid teacher, she was worse at fighting than Frostpaw herself! How on earth? Frostpaw narrowed her eyes at her mentor. Was Squirreltail a new apprentice in disguise? Or were all the warriors about her standard, pathetic little wimps that she could wipe the floors with?

"I'm not impressed with your attitude!" Squirreltail snarled hotheadedly.

"I'm not impressed with your teaching capabilities," Frostpaw meowed with an enormous yawn. "Who taught you?"

"Thrushwing," Squirreltail growled. "He was a good mentor! And he was absolutely shaken by loss from the battle against AutumnClan shortly before your birth! Frostpaw, he lost his mother and his sister, Moonflower and Swallowtail, and he was a brand new

warrior. He was grieving, and he still did his best, and I'm still a good warrior!"

"I'm not sure about that last bit," Frostpaw meowed with a snort. "You're clearly pathetic when it comes to fighting."

Squirreltail was seething by now, and apparently she was done with small talk. "You're doing the elders' ticks for the rest of your apprenticeship," she growled, her voice low and threatening. Frostpaw merely raised her eyebrows in disbelief.

"Really? That's all? So I can insult you whenever I like and just get apprentice chores back?" she demanded. "Why don't we fight with unsheathed claws and you can hurt me."

Squirreltail had already given in to too much goading and she wasn't about to stop now. "Fine!" she snarled. "But when you die to my claws, you aren't going to say anything about it, wimp!" She unsheathed her claws and held them to Frostpaw's face.

Frostpaw unsheathed her own claws and dodged around. She could give Squirreltail the exact same scar she'd given to Silverlight, crisscrossed in three lines across her face, where it was visible to everybody. She leapt, her body arcing through the air, and scarred her mentor like she'd done Silverlight. It didn't come at no cost, obviously. Squirreltail wasn't awful at every part of fighting, and her claws lightly swished across Frostpaw left hind leg, and left a small cut. Frostpaw winced as she landed, quickly licking her leg gently. Squirreltail howled in pain, blood gushing from the wounds on her face.

"You've scarred me the same way," she hissed, her voice hollow. "Why would you? What did I do to you?"

"You were a pathetic mentor and ruined my training," Frostpaw growled, modeling her voice to be as low and threatening as Squirreltail's had been earlier. "But thank you for the voice training. Ha. The only thing I've learnt from this session, other than that my mentor is pathetic." Frostpaw left the bleeding Squirreltail behind for the foxes and badgers, but as soon as that thought occurred to her, she remembered - the fox. The fox who had killed her father

and mother who was still roaming the forest like it was his home! Well, that ended today. Frostpaw changed direction, no longer headed for camp. Although still angry, Squirreltail called after her, "Where are you going? Camp is that way." Frostpaw ignored her mentor, moving on into the deeper parts of the forest, where Hopeheart and Shadowflight's patrol had gone.

"Oh, foxy!" she crowed, her voice shrill and high-pitched. "Fooooooooxyyyy, come out wherever you are!" She carefully shifted her claws so they were hidden but didn't snag on the undergrowth. She tried to form a plan in her head. Her parents' patrol of six cats had failed to defeat this particular foxy, but she, a brand-new apprentice, was going to single-handedly destroy him? She really hadn't thought this plan through, but she didn't care. Either she would kill this fox once and for all, or she would die the same noble way as her parents.

Finally, it emerged. The fox, yellow-fanged with matted fur, it was exactly as the only survivor from that patrol, Grassfeather, had described it. It had haunted eyes and a drooling mouth, with many scars across its body. Scars made from cats' claws. *They did land hits,* Frostpaw thought. Grassfeather had said they'd done nothing to it. Then she realized what had happened. Grassfeather had deserted his patrol. With seven cats, surely they could have killed it. But if two chased after Grassfeather, trying to call him back, and four tried to fight it alone, maybe they had perished and the two who returned had been caught in its mouth. Then... it was Grassfeather's fault they were all dead, wasn't it? Grassfeather's, as well as the fox's. *Well, I know who else has to pay,* she thought menacingly.

The fox lunged and she ducked to the side, raking her claws across its eyes as it passed. She finally noticed something. The fox was limping heavily and almost fell with every step. It was weakened by that patrol, and judging by how scrawny it was, that had affected its hunting. So, the patrol had indeed landed good hits on this scrap of matted fur. It didn't take long for her to kill it. It couldn't fight anyway. But somehow, that wasn't satisfying, killing a wounded creature. It wasn't a fight. It was just slaughter.

"You weren't even a good fight!" Frostpaw bellowed, kicking the fox's body. "I wanted something to train me. Give me scars. You

didn't land a single hit on me." Naturally, the dead creature remained limp and could not move. But her anger... had it shivered? "And I'm hallucinating," Frostpaw grumbled.

She got up and headed back to camp. Would there be a party waiting for her? Killing the fox might have cancelled out scarring Squirreltail... or would it? She'd scarred way too many cats. Well, only two, but two too many, since they were from her own Clan. *The next battle, I'll scar AutumnClan cats and they will regret even hearing my name,* Frostpaw thought. *I'll kill them all, scar the survivors so badly that they will quiver upon hearing my name.* She lifted her head high and strutted back into camp.

"Frostpaw! There you are! What did you do to Squirreltail?" Sunstar demanded, racing down to meet Frostpaw.

"What did I do to Squirreltail? Oh, we trained with unsheathed claws, and turns out, I'm a stronger fighter than my so-called fully-trained warrior mentor," Frostpaw meowed with an eyeroll. "Don't we have anyone better? She's pathetic, and I didn't even think Thrushwing was that bad. Maybe he was, huh." She rolled her eyes again.

"Frostpaw. I tried my best to assign you a mentor," Sunstar meowed, her eyes pleading.

"It wasn't you. You know who assigned me that mentor? It was *Silverlight*." Frostpaw growled. "She's not leader, but you let her speak for you, assigning me that lump for a mentor. And you stood there and watched! What kind of leader are you?"

Sunstar seemed to shrink before her. "I always wanted to be leader," she whispered. "But this Clan is broken. And... you don't know what happened at the Moonstone, Frostpaw. You can't understand Silverlight's hatred."

Frostpaw narrowed her eyes at Sunstar. "What happened at the Moonstone?"

Sunstar shook her head. "I can't tell you. StarClan business."

"FIGHT! FIGHT! ATTACK!"

Frostpaw whipped around. "AutumnClan attacking?!"

"No," Sunstar meowed, her voice hollow. "The Clan is in a civil war."

**Word count: 3224**

**AH, sorry for the cliffhanger! I'm going to try and write the next chapter right after this!**

# Chapter Five

"A civil war? You have got to be kidding me. What are the sides?" Frostpaw demanded, looking around. One end was led by Silverlight. Her entire family, although they supposedly weren't speaking to her, and Silverlight's family made up a lot of the Clan. Lightningstrike, Riverfall, Skyfeather, Blackfoot, Stormpaw - Wait! STORMPAW??

"Stormpaw! No!" Frostpaw shrieked, charging into battle just soon enough to throw Shimmerpelt off her right before she could strike. The Clan was fighting with unsheathed claws and they were murdering their own Clanmates! The other end was led by Stoneclaw, and he was Silverlight's kin, but was fighting her anyway. Frostpaw paused. Was she Silverlight's kin? Of course she was, Stoneclaw was her uncle, Shadowflight's brother! And she'd just thrown off her aunt! She glared down at where Shimmerpelt was cowering on the ground, her eyes low.

"What are you doing? We don't have to fight!" Sunstar cried desperately.

Frostpaw watched as Stoneclaw turned a hard stare on her. "Then you should have done as I asked and *exiled Silverlight*."

Frostpaw gasped. So, she wasn't the only one who'd wanted Sunstar to do that! Stoneclaw didn't even look like he was loyal to Sunstar anymore, with that murderous gleam in his eyes. But he was a good cat underneath, doing what he felt was for the good of the Clan, and through he was dripping with blood, much of it was his own, and he was weak with blood loss despite the tough front.

Sunstar let out a low growl of frustration. "You don't understand.... I can't!"

"What?" Stoneclaw practically fell backwards but Lightpelt caught him, her eyes as hollow as his own.

"What do you mean, you can't?" Lightpelt whispered, eyes terrified.

Sunstar took a step backwards. "I..."

Silverlight barged her way past Lightpelt and Stoneclaw and leapt onto the High Rock. Sunstar leapt on next to her. "You don't belong up here!" Sunstar hissed.

Silverlight ignored her. "The Clan has to know what you did to me!" she screeched, before sinking her claws into Sunstar's shoulders and throwing her down to the ground. Every cat heard the loud snap that followed.

It only took a few moments before Sunstar rose again, neck healed through the returning to life. "Silverlight! Do not tell them! You swore to me! And I swore never to exile" Sunstar clapped her paws over her mouth and Silverlight let out a soft, dangerous purr.

"It looks like you're telling them yourself, aren't you?" Silverlight asked, voice as soft and dangerous as her murderous purr.

"Stop it! Leave her alone and get off the High Rock and back down to the ground like you belong!" Frostpaw snarled. She leapt onto the High Rock in one flying leap, making sure to bunch her legs like Squirreltail had told her so she could jumped further, and knocked Silverlight down. The two of them rolled down the slope from the High Rock and crashed down to the soft grass below. Frostpaw slashed across Silverlight's face, staining that soft green to blood red and let out a murderous cry.

"You want more scars? Want more damage to your ugly face? Well, I'm the one for the job!" Frostpaw leapt atop Silverlight again, slashing across her face in a zigzagging motion, reslashing across the scars. Silverlight howled in pain, the wounds from two moons ago reopening in that moment and bleeding more furiously than they had the last time.

"No! Stop! Leave me alone, your monster!" Silverlight howled.

Frostpaw pinned her to the ground, holding her neck just loosely enough that she wasn't choking. "Tell the Clan what Sunstar did to

you. Maybe we'll understand your anger and thirst for revenge then." She let out a small snort, and when Silverlight remained silent, she slammed her head into the ground. "Speak!"

Silverlight nodded dizzily. "We travelled to the Moonstone together because we weren't sure who would become leader. At the entrance to Mothermouth, Sunstar attacked me. She said I was too savage to be leader. Honeyleaf knew it all, she conspired with Sunstar. Honeyleaf pinned me outside with my claws behind my back like Sunstar had done so I couldn't fight back. If I could have, Honeyleaf would be dead. StarClan didn't even do anything about it - I thought they'd strike Sunstar with lightning or something! And yet, they gave her nine lives." She hissed in anger. "And I was cast aside, no longer the deputy or the leader, even though she was only temporary deputy." She glared at Sunstar. "And since you were only temporary deputy, you're also only temporary leader. I am the rightful leader of SummerClan, and you will fall before me!" With one last burst of strength, she ripped free of Frostpaw's grasp and flung herself onto Sunstar, sinking her claws into her eyes and killing her from the inside. Sunstar bled out on the ground, spasming over and over again. Dying eight times. *StarClan, no!* Frostpaw thought.

Frostpaw jumped and knocked Silverlight off Sunstar, but the yellow-furred leader was already dead. She'd barely led the Clan for two moons, and they had been a good, peaceful two moons, and now the savagery of Silverlight's reign was about to begin. But Frostpaw realized suddenly that it didn't have to. Because Silverlight wasn't the rightful leader of SummerClan. Maybe she had been, but right now, there was another deputy in the line of succession.

"You're not the rightful leader," Frostpaw meowed. She had Silverlight pinned again, but this time she made sure to be choking her.

Silverlight let out a breathless cackle. "And who do you think is? You? The kit who happened to get lucky and scar me?"

"Me!" Frostpaw snorted. "Of course not. But Sunstar had nine lives when she died, meaning she was a StarClan-chosen leader, like it or

not. And because she was a true leader, unlike you, her deputy, Stoneclaw, is the rightful successor to Sunstar."

"But she didn't rightfully get her leadership!" Silverlight spat, thrashing beneath Frostpaw's claws.

"I don't care how Sunstar obtained her leadership, whether it was through injuring you and cheating you or not. StarClan gave her nine lives. They acknowledged her as leader. So now her deputy will become the next leader." A small smile slid onto Frostpaw's face. "And the Clan has no need for you anymore." With that, Frostpaw tightened her grip on Silverlight's neck, sinking her claws into Silverlight's windpipe and slowly choking the silver she-cat to death. Silverlight spasmed one last time and fell to the blood red grass.

Frostpaw turned to Stoneclaw. "Stonestar. You have to get your nine lives."

"That was savage of you, Frostpaw. And... you're a brand new apprentice." Stoneclaw stood up weakly. "Morninglight? Perhaps you should come with me."

"Oh, alright," Morninglight meowed, looking surprised.

"And Frostpaw," Stoneclaw meowed.

Echoes went around the Clan. "*Frostpaw*?" Stormpaw demanded. "But why? She needs to rest. She did a lot today."

"Apprentices have to go to the Moonstone sooner or later," Stoneclaw meowed. "And for this one, I have to say, I think she won't be becoming a warrior at the same time as her siblings."

Frostpaw sighed. "After all that, I'm getting punished?"

Stoneclaw faced her with a gleam in his eyes. "Oh no. Who said that? I never said it had to be later, did I?"

"Oh." Frostpaw meowed, nodding in realization as a smile started to slide onto her face. He was taking her to the Moonstone earlier because she'd probably become a warrior earlier. "Thank you for

this honor." She bent down at Stoneclaw's feet almost to bow to him and he just chuckled.

"No need to bow, Frostpaw. Just hurry along. Anyway, you're quite the good bodyguard, aren't you?" he asked.

It was only as they were padding past WinterClan territory that Frostpaw truly understood what he meant. "Bodyguard? I never did any bodyguarding," she meowed, slightly confused.

"Ha, but if you were Sunstar's bodyguard, you did a pretty good job, killing her murderer, eh?"

"You're praising me for killing a cat? I thought you hated things like that. And don't you know what I did to Squirreltail?" Frostpaw asked, confused. In that mess, had everyone forgotten how she'd scarred her mentor? Squirreltail must be crazy, staring at her reflection all day long in her wet moss and just seeing how ugly she was. Well, she'd always been ugly, just like Silverlight, but now she was uglier. "Oh, by the way, was Squirreltail conspiring with Silverlight in any way?"

"I don't believe so, why?" Stoneclaw asked, looking confused.

"Because, um, Squirreltail wasn't Sunstar's choice. Silverlight pretended Sunstar chose her, but in reality, it was Silverlight who chose Squirreltail for me, not Sunstar. If she was Silverlight's choice, there has to be something off about her, right?" Frostpaw asked.

"It doesn't have to be. Silverlight wasn't always unfair," Stoneclaw meowed, continuing to walk. "About Squirreltail... I'm not happy with what you did to her. Unsheathed claws during training, Frostpaw? But after tonight... I'm willing to forgive you, and I'm sure the Clan is as well. Maybe even Squirreltail. But she's definitely not going to want to be your mentor anymore." A tired shadow of a smile flickered past his face. "You really go through mentors fast, don't you? Silverlight didn't even last thirty seconds, and Squirreltail lasted two weeks."

"Hey, it's an improvement," Frostpaw meowed, and Stoneclaw snorted in amusement.

"We're almost at Mothermouth," Morninglight's soft, gentle voice called from the front of the group.

"Hey, stop right there!" came a voice.

Frostpaw sighed in annoyance. They had been hoping not to run into any WinterClan patrols that night. Sure, they had a valid reason for passing through their territory and WinterClan had always been friendly with SummerClan, but it would take a lengthy explanation, plus they might accidentally mention the civil war, showing how divided their Clan was at that point. Also, Sunstar had only recently passed through WinterClan territory to get her nine lives, and it would seem awfully strange that they were passing through just two moons after. Frostpaw ducked behind Stoneclaw, slightly afraid of what the WinterClan cats might do.

"Why are you on our territory?" came a cool voice, not the same one, and a snow white cat slid out of the ferns, staring intently at Stoneclaw. "And an apprentice? A medicine cat? I'd think you're getting your lives, Stoneclaw, but it seems awfully soon, and why did you bring the apprentice?"

"She might be becoming a warrior soon," Stoneclaw meowed.

The white cat looked down at Frostpaw. "Stoneclaw, she looks fresh out of the nursery."

"I've been an apprentice for two weeks," Frostpaw added helpfully. The snow white cat rolled her eyes.

"Stoneclaw, what is going on in your Clan?" she demanded. "Is Sunstar dead already? That is a horrible tragedy and - Stoneclaw why are you covered in blood?" During the mess of the fight, they had only had time for a quick cleaning. Only Morninglight was blood-free other than her paws, since she'd been treating cats and not fighting. Frostpaw was caked in blood too, but that was mainly Silverlight's.

"Oh, um, sorry," Frostpaw meowed, licking herself clean. Blood tasted awful.

"Yes, Sunstar is dead. There was a small war," Stoneclaw licked himself, embarrassed.

"With who? AutumnClan?" the white cat demanded.

"Snowstar, it wasn't AutumnClan," Morninglight meowed coolly.

*Oh! This is Snowstar?* Frostpaw thought. Snowstar didn't look very intimidating for a Clan leader, but then again, neither had Sunstar. Stoneclaw would be a very intimidating Clan leader as he was huge.

"It was SpringClan? I find that hard to believe," Snowstar meowed.

"We had a civil war," Morninglight meowed softly. Frostpaw shot her a frightened look. Weren't they supposed to keep that a secret? They didn't want to show any weakness in the Clan! But Stoneclaw was nodding along and he didn't even scold Morninglight for revealing that.

"If it's too far to get back to your camp later, you can stay in ours for a while. But wash yourselves in the pool next to Mothermouth," Snowstar warned. "Wouldn't want your blood drawing foxes and badgers, would I?"

"Wash ourselves in the pool?" Frostpaw demanded, terribly shocked. "You mean, like, jump in? To a pool? We're not WinterClan cats, thanks."

"Oh, sorry. I forgot you don't really swim," Snowstar meowed, shaking her head. "You're really missing out. Anyway, just clean yourselves. Roll in garlic or something."

Morninglight let out a small laugh. "I'm not sure your warriors would appreciate garlic either."

"Argh, just something sweet-smelling," Snowstar meowed. "Well, farewell and good luck!"

They continued on their journey to the Moonstone cheerily, the mood lightened slightly. Frostpaw had never realized that Snowstar was kind of funny. She thought all leaders were no-nonsense, boring cats, like Silverlight, Sunstar and Summerstar had been. She

suddenly realized something and let out a small laugh.

"Yes?" Stoneclaw and Morninglight asked together.

"I just realized, we're really on an S streak, aren't we?" Frostpaw meowed in amusement.

"A what?" Morninglight asked.

"Summerstar, Silverlight, Sunstar, Stonestar! All S. Even if we add in Ms. Psychopath Silverlight," Frostpaw meowed.

Stonestar and Morninglight thought for a moment, then nodded solemnly, obviously not finding it funny. *Old cats!* Frostpaw thought with a small shake of her head. Ancient cats couldn't understand humor. She padded to Mothermouth with them but Morninglight stopped her from entering. "You can't go inside. Usually you can, but Stoneclaw is getting his lives and you can't witness that."

"Oh." Frostpaw crossed her paws and waited outside. She spotted the pool and hurried to it to use a little water to wash off the blood. It felt weird, but she was willing to go along with it and get herself clean.

*I wonder what the leadership ceremony is like... will I ever experience it?*

**Word count: 2237**

**I know this chapter is kind of shorter than the last few, but I really didn't want to end it with a cliffhanger because I might not update this in an few days and... I hate cliffhangers as much as you guys. I also didn't want to lose the inspiration, and over 2000 words is good enough for two chapters in the same day, right?**

# Chapter Six

Frostpaw just stood, innocently washing her paws outside Mothermouth, but she felt like going inside, for some reason. If apprentices usually went inside, why not now? Anyway, she was white. She'd blend in with the Moonstone. No cat would have to see her. She crept slowly through the dark tunnel, but she could see a bright light illuminating the cave from the inside - the Moonstone. She stopped, her jaw agape, staring in awe. She noticed Morninglight and Stoneclaw were just lying there, seemingly fast asleep, easy targets for enemies. *Was that why they asked me to stay outside? To protect them from anything?* Frostpaw wondered, but, too late, her curiosity had gotten the better of her. She lay down beside the Moonstone, opposite from her Clanmates so they couldn't see her, and closed her eyes, waiting for sleep to take her.

She woke up in a starry lush green forest where everything sparkled. It seemed odd that they'd have to catch prey where everything sparkled. Wouldn't that hurt their eyes and give them away or something, if they blocked the sparkles? But apparently, StarClan had unlimited prey, so they had opportunities to learn how to hunt regardless of the sparkles.

"Hello?" Frostpaw called hesitantly.

"Hush." Frostpaw found herself wrapped in a tight embrace with Hopeheart. Shadowflight was next to her, his face illuminated by the bright light and the sparkles, and pure joy shone there. Happiness upon seeing his daughter again.

"Stoneclaw's leadership ceremony. Do you want to give him a life?" Hopeheart asked gently.

"Wh-what? I'm not dead," Frostpaw mumbled.

Shadowflight stared. "Then what are you doing here? You should be in camp, or something."

"You don't know about the civil war?" Frostpaw asked softly.

"Of course we do," Hopeheart soothed. "Sunstar came to StarClan, of course. We haven't heard from Silverlight, though. My blasted ex-mentor."

"Hopeheart," Shadowflight warned.

"She probably went to the Dark Forest anyway. She tried to kill Sunstar!" Frostpaw meowed dismissively. She hoped Silverlight never made it to these beautiful forests. She deserved eternal suffering, not land overflowing with prey where she could be happy. No, she deserved to suffer greatly for all that.

"She... but you killed her, Frostpaw. You killed a Clanmate," Hopeheart meowed softly. She sounded slightly troubled. "And now you must go, sweetheart. The ceremony is almost over and you don't want to get caught. Just remember, this is what StarClan is like. Don't go to the Dark Forest."

"Of course not! Why would any cat do that?" Frostpaw asked, mortified.

Hopeheart shook her head mutely, and prodded Frostpaw slightly.

Frostpaw woke in the exact same position, her nose touching the Moonstone as she lay opposite of Stoneclaw. She quickly hurried out the cave and stood guard outside. Just as well she came when she did. AutumnClan warriors crept up on the cave, their tails low.

"There's a stupid apprentice here!"

"Shaddup!"

Frostpaw cocked her eyebrows at them. "This stupid apprentice is going to fight you!" Then, she threw herself at the AutumnClan warriors. She killed the first in the surprise attack and whirled around to face the other two. Really! It was their leader and deputy. Mousestar's first deputy had passed already so this was Birdsong. Both leader and deputy had come here, to murder a medicine cat and brand new leader?

"Move," Birdsong instructed. "You don't want to die, do you?"

"Better I die than my leader!" Frostpaw spat.

"Oho, your leader! Ha. He's so great, is he?" Mousestar taunted. "He has nine lives, doesn't he? He's a true leader, isn't he? If so, why are you so scared?"

"Because you have nine lives too!" Frostpaw protested, unsheathing her claws again. She'd sheathed them when she'd killed the first one, Rosepelt, because killing was still new to her. She couldn't do it easily. She knew the warrior code, that real warriors shouldn't kill unless completely necessary, but it was necessary now, wasn't it? They wanted to kill her leader and medicine cat, plus they outnumbered her two to one!

"However, we have reinforcements," Birdsong meowed cruelly, a terrible, mean smile sliding onto her face.

Frostpaw took a step backwards as seven more cats emerged from the trees. They had battle scars because AutumnClan was always fighting, and even the tiniest apprentice had a scar across his eye.

"Scarredeye," the tiny apprentice introduced.

"*Scarredeye*?" Frostpaw demanded. "Shouldn't it be Scarredpaw or something?"

"But it's my eye that's scarred," he mewed, looking confused.

"She thinks you're an apprentice. Show her, Scarredeye!" Birdsong growled.

Scarredeye leapt on top of Frostpaw, slashing wildly, but he lacked the skill and coordination of a true warrior. Frostpaw evaded him easily, landing a solid hit on his stomach which accidentally opened up his belly. Blood pooled onto the ground and he collapsed, writhing on the ground. Birdsong merely tsked and didn't do anything to help. The other warriors tsked along, saying they'd made Scarredeye a warrior too young and he wasn't even ready to fight the pathetic white-furred SummerClan apprentice.

"That was disappointing," Mousestar meowed, his voice cold and calculating. "How much longer till your leader comes out, do you think?"

"Not long," Frostpaw meowed confidently. "Then he'll chase all you baddies away, and he'll kill you all like I killed Scarredeye!"

Whatever that was, it egged them on. They all attacked her in one fluid moment, and she just slid sideways, letting them all claw each other. Some hits were fatal and two died from that. It only seemed to anger them more. They hissed that she didn't fight properly and refused to call it tactics. They apparently didn't want to accept tactics in battle.

"Never mind," Mousestar growled. "Birdsong, kill her!"

Fear flashed for the briefest moment in her eyes before Birdsong leapt onto Frostpaw with her claws unsheathed. They were tinged red, pretty much showing how many battles she'd been in. AutumnClan warriors chanted for their deputy, booing for Frostpaw, uncaring that it was distracting Birdsong and doing nothing to Frostpaw. Finally the deputy whipped around and shouted, "STOP CHANTING!" which was all the time it took for Frostpaw to casually slip by and slit her throat. Birdsong fell to the ground and spasmed weakly a few times before finally dying. Frostpaw looked around contemptuously.

"Who's next?" she growled.

They all crouched low, ready to spring, and newly named Stonestar came out of Mothermouth with his medicine cat. Both of their jaws dropped agape when they saw six AutumnClan warriors crouched low ready to spring on one of their apprentices.

"Stop!" Morninglight cried. "In the name of peace, stop!"

"What's peace?" Mousestar cackled. "Attack her for even suggesting that, too!"

"Morninglight!" Stonestar cried dramatically, leaping in to save her. *What about me?* Frostpaw thought. Looks like she'd have to fend for

herself.

But Stonestar was helping her in a heartbeat. Frostpaw almost wondered why, but then she realized Morninglight's body was spasming and the pale gray medicine cat was dead on the ground. Stonestar's eyes glittered with tears,  but no true warrior cried. No true warrior showed weakness. The basic rules.

Frostpaw fought side-by-side with him, ignoring the fact that his moves were weak, his legs shaking, that he was faltering. He was like a helpless new apprentice. *Well, I'm just about a new apprentice, but I'm not helpless!* Frostpaw thought indignantly as Stonestar missed one of his swipes. His eyes were cloudy with tears. How did he see through that? Oh, right, he couldn't. Was that why he was missing everything? Because of a childish crush on a medicine cat? Really, was he any better than Sunstar or Silverlight? Apparently not. Well, he was Silverlight's kin, how did she not see that coming? She fought basically on her own, killing a few of them and eventually the last two ran. Killing gave her a sickening feeling but she was getting used to it, and that sickening feeling was slowly evaporating. Whether that was a good or bad thing, she didn't really know. Did that mean her guilty conscience was going away? Because frankly, that was definitely a bad thing.

"Done moping for her? Can we go home now?" Frostpaw demanded.

"I thought we were... going to WinterClan's camp."

"Morninglight is dead. You can go there, I'll go back to camp and bury her," Frostpaw offered. Somehow, Stonestar actually took her up on the offer, apparently not wanting to bury his crush himself. Frostpaw shook her head in wonder, wondering how on earth this cat had become deputy. He left carrying a grown cat to a almost fresh out of the nursery apprentice? She dropped him off at the WinterClan camp like she was his mother and then trekked the long way back home with Morninglight on her shoulders. She'd probably skipped a meal somewhere because she was feeling incredibly hungry, but she had to carry the medicine cat back home so she couldn't stop to hunt, which made her feel kind of annoyed.

When she reached camp, everything was solemn. She'd passed the

graveyard earlier and had seen Silverlight had a grave, although it was decorated with withered flowers instead of fresh ones like the ones on Sunstar's grave. Sunstar's was decorated with cheery daisies and sunflowers.

Frostpaw dropped Morninglight in the center of camp and plopped down on a stack of moss. "I'm back," she meowed weakly, her shoulders aching and her stomach rumbling. Skyfeather dashed over and offered her a piece of prey which she gladly accepted, then asked her what had happened.

"AutumnClan attacked us as we left Mothermouth. I... kind of killed like six cats," Frostpaw meowed bashfully. It was true, though. She had killed six. Or was it seven? She hoped it was six. She wasn't even supposed to be killing these cats.

"And... Stonestar died or something?" Skyfeather prompted her gently.

"No, of course not. He has nine lives!" Frostpaw meowed, barely suppressing her mrrow of amusement. "He stopped by the WinterClan camp for the night."

"And left you to carry Morninglight all on your own?" Skyfeather's eyes flashed with concern.

"Er... I can start going into body building?" Frostpaw asked, unsure of what to say. Skyfeather seemed... genuinely concerned and this was... totally weird?

"Well, we should get down to burying her, I guess," Hawkfeather meowed with a shuddering sigh. "We had four medicine cats and now I'm the only one. Isn't this so... crazy?"

"Yeah, it is," Frostpaw meowed with a small and delicate nod. She looked around for Stormpaw and saw her lying at the apprentices' den.

"I thought you'd forgot about me," Stormpaw purred when Frostpaw approached.

"Of course not! How could any cat forget you?" Frostpaw asked,

purring.

Stormpaw shrugged, but she pulled Frostpaw into a tight embrace, their tails touching like siblings did. Frostpaw saw Brightpaw running after Dewfrost and Ashpaw chasing Shininglight and glanced at her sworn sister.

"Told you so, why didn't you believe me?" Stormpaw asked, laughing.

That night, Stormpaw led Frostpaw out of camp to watch the stars from a pretty hill. They could see every star in the night sky from that hill, and they gleamed beautifully, sparkling like the forests of StarClan. Frostpaw knew she could stare at them all night and watch them stare back at her. She wondered if her mother and father were watching her from up there. Maybe they were. Did they stare down with pride, disappointment, shock or anger? She herself was shocked with what she had done that day. She had killed six cats, and that was flat-out terrible. Who did that? Who killed literally six cats on their second week of being an apprentice? *Apparently, I do,* she thought, with a twinge of amusement, but it did nothing to hide her guilt and regret. But what was more worrying was that all that guilt and regret was fading backwards, like she wasn't guilty about killing those cats and she didn't regret it anymore. How was that possible? It wouldn't scar her heart for her whole life?

Stonestar returned the next morning, alive and well-fed. He turned up to his mess of a Clan and just sighed in disappointment, like he'd expected them to fix all the damages done to their camp and clean out all the blood in one night when he was gone. He just looked around, frowning, then entered the leader's den which Frostpaw and Stormpaw had spent dawn to sunrise cleaning out, freshening up the moss and tidying the lichen hangings.

"That's it? No offer to help us do anything around here?" Hawkfeather grumbled. "I knew young cats couldn't be leader! Has he even named a deputy, for StarClan's sake?"

Stonestar popped out of his den. "Oh, right, the new deputy's Amberfrost," he meowed, then disappeared into his den again.

Frostpaw's jaw dropped and so did Hawkfeather's. "That's it?" the old medicine cat grumbled. "No proper ceremony for my sister? She is not going to like that."

"He loved Morninglight, you know," Frostpaw meowed softly. "He's grieving."

Hawkfeather looked away. "I knew about that relationship, but it's dead and gone now. The problem now is, with Stonestar like this and Amberfrost not even aware she's deputy... what's going to happen to SummerClan now?"

**Word count: 2139**

# Chapter Seven

The next few days were highly uneventful and Frostpaw found herself wasting away during the day. It seemed to have suddenly crashed on her that she didn't have a mentor, and since Stonestar never left his den at all, he never seemed to get down to giving her a new one. Skyfeather tried to train her a little, and it actually worked for a little while, but he was slightly too soft with her, plus after a while even his awesome fighting skills couldn't rival hers anymore. That was kind of annoying and Frostpaw was sick of that. She didn't know how she was so good at fighting but it was kind of sickening, watching the other warriors have to give up their wins to her, a brand new apprentice. It had been satisfying for a while, but a while only.

"Hey, you still in there?"

Frostpaw looked up as Stormpaw peered inside the apprentice den. "Yeah, I kind of am," Frostpaw admitted wryly. "I mean, no cat's training me from day-to-day anymore. I admit, Skyfeather is a good hunting teacher, but he's not my official mentor so he still gets sent on dozens of patrols. Today I woke at sunrise and he had already gone on the dawn patrol. I feel like that Skyfeather is working himself to death - what would he want an apprentice for, anyway?"

Stormpaw faced Frostpaw with an amused glow in her eyes. "That's not why he's putting in so much effort for you, Frostpaw."

Frostpaw just frowned back. What, then? He really wanted to show he could be her mentor so he could be deputy later on? She'd never pictured Skyfeather as an ambitious cat. He'd always simply seemed to hang around at the side, not really a main character in anyone's story, just one of those background warriors who would never play up.

Stormpaw shook her head despairingly. "You are so blur, Frostpaw." She sighed, lifting her tail high. "Squirreltail is going to continue training you. Her face wounds have sufficiently healed and she is

technically your mentor."

Frostpaw's jaw dropped. "You have to be kidding me."

Stormpaw frowned. "Of course I'm not. Why do you think Stonestar never assigned you a new mentor?"

"Because he's too busy moping in his den?" Frostpaw asked wryly.

"No, it's because you don't need one. You already have Squirreltail, and she's a pretty good mentor, right?" Stormpaw asked gently.

"To some extent," Frostpaw muttered. Stormpaw smiled.

Due to all that, Frostpaw found herself doing hunting training with Squirreltail. Frostpaw didn't really pick up hunting naturally the way she did with fighting. She'd always had a flair for fighting but she was just a regular apprentice on the hunting side, struggling to perfect the hunter's crouch like everyone else. And, somehow, the scars on her face seemed to make Squirreltail even more irritable than usual, and she had little patience to spend on Frostpaw supposedly keeping her butt lower and placing her paws more gently so she wouldn't scare her prey away.

"You're a natural at fighting, so what about hunting?" Squirreltail growled impatiently after four failed attempts. Usually mentors were a lot kinder and more encouraging, but all she had to give Frostpaw was temper.

Frostpaw growled back, "Well, maybe, you useless lump of fur, if you actually taught me something and corrected me on something, I might actually be walking the path to learning how to catch prey?"

"Didn't Skyfeather teach you anything?" Squirreltail growled.

"He taught me all I know right now!" Frostpaw fired back.

"And that week I spent trying to teach you how to hunt?" Squirreltail glowered.

"Useless! You yelled at me every hour of the day!" Frostpaw objected, moving into a battle crouch, ready to spring at any

moment.

Squirreltail's eyes seemed to burn. "NO! WE ARE NOT DOING FIGHTING TRAINING BECAUSE I DON'T WANT ANY MORE SCARS ON MY FACE! NOW GET TO YOUR HUNTER'S CROUCH AND ACTUALLY DO SOMETHING PROPERLY!"

Suddenly, white paws parted the ferns and Skyfeather waltzed into the sandy hollow. "Do you need some help, Squirreltail?" he asked breezily.

"You haven't even had an apprentice before!" Squirreltail snarled.

"I don't understand why. I'm not that much older than you, but I have younger siblings that are almost warriors. Then again..." he sighed. "Silverlight did become deputy right after we became apprentices, and then she had kits right after that."

"Don't you dare speak Silverlight's name unless you're insulting her!" Frostpaw growled, baring her teeth at Skyfeather.

Skyfeather frowned. "She's still my mother, Frostpaw. Nothing can change that. I admit, she made some horrid decisions, but she tried her best for us."

"You know what I know but you don't, Skyfeather? Silverlight never made it to StarClan!" Frostpaw snarled.

"What?" Skyfeather took a step back. "How-how do you know?" His soft, gentle eyes had switched to those of a grieving warrior. "Why....?"

"I saw StarClan, and she wasn't there. Probably scrabbling int he Dark Forest!" Frostpaw snarled, and with that, she turned tail and stormed off.

She reached camp, but nothing was going better there.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU ACCIDENTALLY KILLED HER WHILE TRAINING?" came a bellow. *Killed her? Her? It's not... it can't be, right?* Frostpaw ran into camp, terrified. And there, her worst fears came true. Stormpaw's bloodied body lay in the center of camp and

she was dead, as dead as dead got.

"I said, it was an accident! Stormpaw wanted to train with unsheathed claws, so we did, and-" Dewfrost and Brightpaw seemed to be trying to explain.

"Oh, is that true? You think I'll be softer with you just because you're my son?" Amberfrost growled, her eyes boring into his. "If you were fighting with claws unsheathed, Dewfrost, why is the only blood on you Stormpaw's? Also, why were you fighting with claws unsheathed? The last time we did that, you saw what happened to your sister! You see her face now! Awful! Messed up! And you did that again anyway! Now Stormpaw is dead!"

"What, nobody cares!" Dewfrost fired back. "She's the daughter of stupid Silverlight, why would any cat care about her, not after all Silverlight's done?"

Frostpaw leapt on top of Dewfrost and tackled him to the ground. She'd had enough of this. "I don't care if she was the daughter of Silverlight," she hissed. "And if I could love her, many others could as well. She was a great cat. Now dead to your claws. And now you shall die to mine."

"Frostpaw, stop!" Amberfrost snarled.

Frostpaw almost killed Dewfrost, but she stopped herself. Slipping into killing again? Where on earth had her guilty conscience gone? If nothing stopped her from killing automatically, then she had to restrain herself, even if that was difficult. She slowly tiptoed off Dewfrost but immediately he lunged at her.

"You're a savage!" he hissed. "Do you know how many cats you've killed? Seven, Frostpaw, seven, and you're a brand new apprentice! No, we're done with you. SummerClan doesn't need savages like you." He unsheathed his claws to deal the killing blow, and Frostpaw slackened in his grip. Well, she could die now, she supposed. Without Stormpaw, life wasn't really worth living.

"What's going on in here?"

Three medicine cats had just rushed into camp. Moonshine from WinterClan,  Skytail from AutumnClan and Mottledpelt from SpringClan.

"Pah! Medicine cats!" Dewfrost snarled. He unsheathed his claws and slid them coolly till they were right underneath Frostpaw's neck. "It's time to die, savage," he growled.

Frostpaw seriously didn't want to kill him, but this was a life-and-death situation. Still, there was something else she could do to spare his life. She reared on her hind legs and kicked him off of her. Dewfrost was sent flying and he smashed against the warriors' den. He writhed in pain, but still, better that than death, right?

"What has happened to the peaceful SummerClan I knew?" Moonshine asked in disbelief.

Frostpaw walked over to her, wanting to see her reaction, and Moonshine stepped backwards, her eyes shining with terror. "SummerClan has changed," she meowed. "Thanks to stupid Silverlight, we're done with peace." She turned away, wondering if she had said the right thing. She was just an apprentice, though, so while her words would stay, she hoped no cat would believe her.

Skytail came forward. "I'm here to discuss a prophecy with Hawkfeather."

Mottledpelt glared at him. "You already said too much, Skytail. Amberfrost, where is your leader?" Right, he couldn't possibly know it was Stonestar now, but he did know Sunstar was dead. Only Moonshine could know that their leader had changed again.

"In his den," Amberfrost meowed bitterly, and she added under her breath, "Like he always is."

"Oh," Moonshine meowed with a frown. "Then, can we see the deputy?"

"You're talking to her," Frostpaw meowed, gesturing to Amberfrost.

"Oh, it's you!" Skytail meowed in relief. He was probably glad that the deputy was experienced. Some cats were already struggling to

remember if Stonestar had ever had an apprentice. Amberfrost definitely had.

"May we see Hawkfeather?" Mottledpelt asked.

"Of course. The medicine den is that way." Amberfrost pointed them in the direction of the medicine den and the three medicine cats hurried that way.

For some reason, Frostpaw was interested in what they were doing. It was probably going to be boring medicine cat business, but Skytail had mentioned something about a prophecy. Maybe she'd learn who the prophecy cat was, then she could be friends. Frostpaw crept behind them and snuck into the medicine den with them, her heart pounding against her chest. She hid behind a neat pile of poultices which reeked and strained her ears to hear their quiet conversation.

"I had a prophecy around seven moons ago," Skytail began.

"As did I," Moonshine meowed.

"As did I," Mottledpelt meowed.

The three medicine cats stared expectantly at Hawkfeather, and he finally nodded. "I had a prophecy as well."

"I was told," Skytail meowed, "that the prophecy was ordered, and we each got a snippet of the prophecy. I got the end line."

"I believe I have the start," Hawkfeather meowed.

And so they spoke in order, Hawkfeather then Mottledpelt then Moonshine then Skytail, and together they recited the prophecy, the way it should be.

"The snow-white cat will save you all,

The cat silver as the moon will bring peace,

The burning flame will bring destruction,

The tortoiseshell leaf will bring the flames.

These cats were born with a great destiny

However the destinies are not all good."

"StarClan really needs to improve on their rhyming," Hawkfeather commented. Skytail whirled on him.

"This is serious!" the white tom snarled, his beetle-black eyes fixing on Hawkfeather. "Who is the snow-white cat?"

"I believe it is either Frostpaw or Cloudpaw, although I'm not sure," Hawkfeather meowed heavily.

"Frostpaw? That savage that was fighting Dewfrost? No, you must be kidding. It's definitely Cloudpaw," Skytail meowed.

"Really, you think so?" Hawkfeather asked, raising his eyebrows. "I rather think it would be Frostpaw. She has stood out in the Clan, at this point, not for the right reasons, but Cloudpaw is still faded in the background. No one really knows him, or anything."

"Really suspicious, Hawkfeather. I think it's Cloudpaw," Skytail turned to Moonshine. "What about you? Who's your peaceful cat silver as the moon?"

"I believe it's Streamlight. And she is a peaceful cat. No one else in the Clan fits." Mottledpelt glanced at Moonshine. "But what about yours? The burning flame bringing destruction?"

"I don't understand mine," Moonshine meowed. "The only cat who looks like a burning flame is Flamewing, but he's so timid, kind and caring. I don't see how he could bring destruction."

"A prophecy is a prophecy, Moonshine," Skytail meowed wryly. "For mine, the 'tortoiseshell leaf' is Turtleleaf."

"Wait," meowed Moonshine. "Turtleleaf will bring the flames. What if that means, Turtleleaf will bring Flamewing, and Flamewing will cause destruction?"

"Well, that's bad. I think we should mix them around a bit," Skytail meowed.

"'Mix them around a bit'?" Hawkfeather demanded. "You mean send them to different Clans? I'm sorry but SummerClan is going to wait on this one. We want Frostpaw to complete her training before any of that happens."

"No, it's simple. We'll send Streamlight to SummerClan," Mottledpelt meowed.

"Wait, then you're placing the two bad cats together?" Skytail demanded.

"'Bad cats'?" Moonshine snapped. "I don't know about you, but Flamewing isn't bad! What if the destruction he brings isn't to the Clans? To some enemy we have?"

"And what if it is to the Clans, Moonshine? We can't let him stay with Turtleleaf, that would be disastrous! You know what, we'll send Streamlight to Flamewing, and Turtleleaf can come to SummerClan. Any objections?" Skytail asked.

Frostpaw wanted to object - what was with all this? She didn't want Turtleleaf in SummerClan. Nothing against Turtleleaf, of course, but a complete stranger in their midst? That would let her know how broken SummerClan was. She could object, but she wasn't supposed to be there anyway. Frostpaw snuck out of the medicine den and went to find Stormpaw to think, just realizing a moment later that Stormpaw was dead. Frostpaw padded out to Stormpaw's body in the clearing.

Amberfrost was standing over it, her expression solemn. She looked up when Frostpaw arrived, seeing the poor apprentice losing the only cat she'd ever cared about.

"Is Stonestar going to give her a warrior name? I think she deserves one," Frostpaw meowed fiercely. "She was the bravest, most determined cat I know. If she doesn't deserve a warrior name, nobody does."

Amberfrost sighed. "But that's the thing. I want to give her a warrior name but Stonestar doesn't even want to go out of his den! It's so infuriating."

"Then can you give her a name, on behalf of our leader?" Frostpaw asked bitterly. She couldn't bear to let Stormpaw go to StarClan as... well, as a 'paw. She had to be a warrior!

"Very well," Amberfrost sighed heavily. "From this point onwards, she will be known as Stormwind." She didn't say the whole ceremony, but that was enough to bring a warm glow to Frostpaw.

"I wanna be called Frostwind when I'm a warrior!" Frostpaw meowed delightedly.

"Ha, we'll see. That time, it won't be my choice," Amberfrost meowed. "But good luck, Frostpaw. Don't become too savage, by the way. And notice that poor tom."

"What?" Frostpaw asked.

Amberfrost smiled innocently. "Nothing!" she trilled, and scurried away.

**Word count: 2328**

**Super weird ending but...yeah.**

# Chapter Eight

Much time passed as Frostpaw trained. She had many mentors as no cat wanted to train her for very long, and no cat could keep up with the speed at which she learnt battle techniques. Skyfeather became her permanent hunting teacher, during which Frostpaw found she enjoyed his sessions. Skyfeather was fun and though quite a bit older than Frostpaw, he was still jovial and childish, making him a great friend for Frostpaw. Frostpaw was starting to wonder if Skyfeather was that tom Amberfrost had spoken about. He certainly mooned over her enough!

It didn't take very long for Frostpaw to be asked to take her warrior assessment. She had barely been training for three moons when Amberfrost approached her and simply stated that it was time.

"I'm ready? So, when is the assessment?" Frostpaw asked, confused. Assessment! Already?! She was so new. And what about her siblings? It wasn't like she cared about Cloudpaw or Windpaw, but ... Really?

"Even Hawkfeather has noticed you, and he doesn't see much. He wants you a warrior early," Amberfrost meowed.

It was Hawkfeather's idea? Frostpaw wondered, frowning slightly. The medicine cat requested for new warriors? Why did that seem off, and why did Amberfrost look as uncomfortable as Frostpaw felt?

"If you say so," Frostpaw meowed, unconvinced.

"Great. Stonestar will hold your ceremony now," Amberfrost meowed.

"Now?" Frostpaw gawked.

"Frostpaw, manners. And yes, now. When else?" Amberfrost asked coolly.

Frostpaw stared back flatly. Amberfrost was acting weird. Like, really weird. She wasn't usually this... mean. Well, sort of. "Stonestar is actually gonna do it?" Frostpaw asked.

A flicker of annoyance passed across Amberfrost's muzzle. "Of course he is. He's Clan leader. I mean, he is a nincompoop at times, but he won't deny an apprentice her warrior name. After all, he kind of named you his bodyguard publicly?"

"I'm not becoming his bodyguard! That's trashy!" Frostpaw protested.

"You may not have a choice," Amberfrost responded grimly.

Frostpaw hurried out underneath the High Rock and waited patiently. Amberfrost had definitely called her Clan leader a nincompoop, and yet, for some reason, she couldn't find the heart to disagree with the deputy. He was being a nincompoop - rumor had it that he'd turned away all the other Clans. The three medicine cats who had visited two moons ago hadn't been seen since, and even though they had talked about transferring their prophecy cats to other Clans, there had been no sign of any of them.

Stonestar jumped onto the High Rock and Frostpaw felt a flicker of apprehension. Was she actually ready for this? Cloudpaw and Windpaw were watching her with obvious envy, and for some reason, Frostpaw felt bad about it. They weren't her siblings - Stormwind was. And again, a flicker of apprehension crossed her stomach. She'd awaited this day excitedly since her first day as an apprentice, but she'd always imagined that Stormwind would be there with her, cheering her on. She wasn't there.

"Your new name is Frostheart. And stuff. Yeah bye." Stonestar jumped off the High Rock and went back into his den.

Frostheart stared after his fat form in disbelief. Those weren't even the proper words of the ceremony! And how could he call her Frostheart? She hadn't thought she'd ever get a name like that! That was like calling her coldhearted, and obviously, she wasn't that. But seeing that dazed, uncaring look in her leader's eyes... it was like he'd used the first name that crossed his head for her warrior name.

And that first name was the lousy one called Frostheart. And that was her name now?

Frostheart stared around, looking to who, she didn't know. That was when she remembered - she didn't have friends or family. She technically had family, but Cloudpaw and Windpaw were so far gone from her, gone even during kithood, that she knew they weren't ones she could turn to. But who else, then? She'd pretty much set an invisible border between her and the entire Clan, turning only to Stormwind for everything. Recently, she'd busied herself in her training, trying to make herself forget that her sworn sister was already dead, and had collapsed, exhausted, into her nest each night, too tired to bother interacting with the other apprentices, which happened to only be her not-siblings. She'd basically turned everyone away, so that now in this kind of situation, she had no one to turn to. *I guess I'll never trust anyone but myself,* Frostheart thought grimly, looking away from where she'd been staring - the leader's den. SeasonClan's hopeless leader was probably moping in there, maybe thinking of other awful names for Cloudpaw and Windpaw. Frostheart shouldn't care, but she did. Cloudpaw really hadn't done anything wrong except to fall for Windpaw's tricks. He was still her brother, like it or not. He'd never really renounced her ties to him.

Frostheart lowered her head and trudged over to the warrior's den. Perhaps she could manage a short nap before her vigil. Would anyone wake her up if she overslept? No - they'd just let her endure the embarrassment. So it looked like there wasn't going to be any napping. She just let out a shuddering sigh and turned away from everyone. Eyes bored into her, because usually, new warriors celebrated their accomplishment with the Clan. It should especially be her, because she was made a warrior early. But what did she have to celebrate with the Clan anyway? She was alone even among her Clanmates, even among distant family, and nothing would ever change that. There was no purpose in her life.

But then it clicked. She had some sort of purpose, even though she didn't know it. There had been a prophecy and she was a part of it. She was that snow-white cat. Although she didn't know what it meant, which was annoyingly frustrating. She could remember

those words clearly:

The snow-white cat will save you all,

The cat silver as the moon will bring peace,

The burning flame will bring destruction,

The tortoiseshell leaf will bring the flames.

These cats were born with a great destiny

However the destinies are not all good.

Frostheart knew that she was that snow-white cat, but she was supposed to save everybody? That was complete nonsense - she didn't even have friends in her own Clan! But the other prophecy cats - she had to meet them. Streamlight, Flamewing and Turtleleaf. The good thing was, Streamlight's Clan was SpringClan and SpringClan had a border with SummerClan. Streamlight's one was also positive - the cat silver as the moon will bring peace. Meaning she was going to bring peace, something the Clans would definitely need. The burning flame will bring destruction - Flamewing, the nervous, jittery cat, was going to bring destruction? It seemed strangely impossible.

"It's time for the gathering," Amberfrost called, breaking Frostheart away from her thoughts.

Frostheart frowned, trying to remember. But then it dawned on her - she'd never been to a gathering, and she was going to miss this one because she had her warriors' vigil. Wait - then why did she know Flamewing was a jittery cat? Had someone told her? Frostheart racked her brains, but she couldn't remember. What... did the prophecy cats have some kind of mental telepathy? Even as she thought of it, messages were crossing her mind, voices of strangers, the kind you'd always assume were just other parts of your head talking. But these voices... they'd always been there, only she'd ignored them. And so they went:

*We have to figure out who the last prophecy cat is. He or she should have this mental telepathy too, right, Streamlight?*

*Of course. But Turtleleaf, we can't be sure. Your voices only became prominent to me after I became a warrior, so maybe the other prophecy cat is still an apprentice, and can't hear us clearly.*

*That's mouse-brained! Why have telepathy when only warriors can access it?*

*Stop shouting at me, Turtleleaf! I'm already getting sick of this telepathy because all you do is yell at me!*

*Alright, alright, sorry! Flamewing, don't you have ANYTHING to contribute?*

*I'm just disturbed by the prophecy - I don't wanna bring destruction!*

By now, Frostheart was starting to distinguish the voices, that of Streamlight, Turtleleaf and Flamewing, and she was trying to figure out how to add her voice to the telepathic conversation.

*Hey*, she tried.

*Whoa! Who's that?* Flamewing's voice shouted in surprise.

*It's me - your last prophecy cat. My name is Frostheart,* Frostheart intoned.

*OH! You used to be Frostkit! I rescued you from the river!* Streamlight's voice cried with happiness.

*Well, not you. Your mentor. But... yeah?* Frostheart muttered in her mind.

*Well, that was easy,* Turtleleaf's contemptuous voice meowed. *Last prophecy cat, check. Now, to proceed with our plans.*

*Plans?* Frostheart yelped. She tried to send a mental message just to Streamlight. *Streamlight, why are we conspiring with them? Flamewing's going to bring destruction and Turtleleaf will turn him to do it! The tortoiseshell leaf will bring the flames, remember?*

*What?* Streamlight's voice cried. *What do you mean, the tortoiseshell cat will bring the flames?*

*How do you not know? Haven't you heard the prophecy?* Frostheart cried. *She recited: The snow-white cat will save you all, the cat silver as the moon will bring peace, the burning flame will bring destruction, the tortoiseshell leaf will bring the flames. These cats were born with a great destiny, however not all the destinies are good.* It was only then that she realized it wasn't a private conversation at all, and that Flamewing and Turtleleaf had been getting all of their messages to each other. The two of them knew of the prophecy now.

Wait - that wasn't right! Flamewing had known from the beginning!

*Didn't you know it all?* Frostheart asked, confused.

*We knew some things,* Streamlight replied wryly. *For one, we each knew our part of the prophecy. I knew mine, to bring peace. Flamewing knew his, too. But Turtleleaf didn't know. We only found out she was a prophecy cat through telepathy*.

*So... Turtleleaf didn't know her destiny was as bad as Flamewing's?* Frostheart sighed. *But didn't you realize? Someone had to turn Flamewing. He's too jittery to do it himself. Bring destruction? Flamewing? That's ridiculous.*

*This is completely ridiculous! I'm not going to turn Flamewing over! I'm going to stop him from causing the destruction! We all are! I'm not evil!* Turtleleaf cried, her voice getting shriller and more desperate. *Please, no. It can't be me - why is the bad cat me?*

*Hey, Turtleleaf, I'm a bad guy too,* Flamewing reminded her, but Frostheart could tell by his voice that his expression was stormy. *We're in it together.*

*Frostheart knows the entire prophecy,* Streamlight meowed. *I don't know how you do. Tell us!*

*I overheard the medicine cats when they visited SeasonClan camp a moon ago,* Frostheart explained. *That's when I overheard them. They told the prophecy to each other. I'm actually not sure if I'm the prophecy cat. Skytail is convinced that it's Cloudpaw, my not-brother.*

*Your... not-brother?* Streamlight asked, confused.

*It's a long story. Anyway I have to go. I've got no idea what I look like while sending these messages.* Frostheart snapped out of the telepathic conversation and looked around.

"Are you okay? You were staring into space and mumbling," Skyfeather meowed, peering at her with concern.

"Oh, I'm alright. Nothing serious, like, a daydream, I suppose," Frostheart meowed, feigning a yawn.

"Well, you have to stay awake the entire night!" Skyfeather meowed in amusement. "No more daydreaming then!"

"Yeah sure," Frostheart meowed, yawning for real this time. "Has the gathering party left yet?"

Skyfeather shook his head. "Amberfrost's still trying to coax Stonestar into joining them."

"I'm not sure if that's wise," Frostheart meowed. "Isn't it better for Amberfrost to go? She's a strong deputy, whereas Stonestar will make us seem weak. If Amberfrost goes on ahead, says Stonestar is sick and couldn't come, then that solves everything, right? It's nearly leaf-bare, early outbreaks of greencough aren't abnormal."

"But that's the thing. We can't admit we have greencough in camp!" Skyfeather exploded.

"We don't have greencough." Then Frostheart frowned, confused. "Do we?"

Skyfeather nodded grimly. "We do. And that's the thing - Amberfrost caught whitecough an hour ago. It's not serious, but she can't go coughing to the gathering. Stonestar is perfectly healthy so he's ideal."

"Oh. If Amberfrost has whitecough... do we say both of them have whitecough?" Frostheart asked. "Just say, nothing serious, turns out, both of them have whitecough! Viola!"

"And who will speak for the Clan, then?" Skyfeather asked testily.

Frostheart could easily see his point, though. No one in the Clan was quite brave enough to stand there and announce what had gone on in the Clan, especially since this time would have to involve Sunstar's death and then oof, Stonestar and Amberfrost are sick! Leader and deputy almost going to be down! Frostheart almost wished Amberfrost was the one with nine lives and not Stonestar. She was the leader they needed during these trying times, and she was sick. Frostheart wanted to say she'd do it, but she had to stay in camp and stand vigil so she couldn't. It wouldn't be nice to give everyone false hope like that.

"I don't know," Frostheart sighed, and she let her shoulders sag. "Maybe it's pointless."

**Word count: 2172**

**You waited a long time I suppose, but that wasn't exactly because I was neglecting this - I went on holiday for nine days. So... yeeeeaaaaaaaaah.**

# Chapter Nine

In the end, sickly Amberfrost ended up taking the Clan to the gathering. It was a horrible idea - she was coughing all night and the other leaders were extremely disturbed by her and keeping their distance. Now they were scolding SummerClan for being inconsiderate, when really, the one to be blamed for all this mess was Stonestar. The only thing the Clan could say about him was that he had greencough and was a lot worse-off than Amberfrost, so there she was, announcing the stuff in the Clan.

Frostheart was meaning to sit with Skyfeather, but when she spotted Streamlight, Turtleleaf and Flamewing all sitting in one group, she figured out what that meant, so she bidded Skyfeather a quick goodbye, hiding her look of confusion when something seemingly sad flickered across his face and she hurried over to join the other prophecy cats, her tail flicking back and forth in greeting. They looked up when they saw her, and Streamlight flicked her tail back in greeting, too. Flamewing stared dully back. Of course he would. He was supposed to bring destruction, and naturally he wasn't happy about that. Turtleleaf seemed mad too - perhaps it was because now she knew she had a part in that destruction, by turning Flamewing to do it.

"My leader has been talking about sending me to another Clan," Streamlight began anxiously. "What about yours? Are they planning on sending you away, too?"

"I have no idea. All the medicine cats talked about it when they came to SummerClan a few moons ago," Frostheart explained wryly.

"Ugh! It's not fair! Why do you get to know everything just because the medicine cats met in your Clan?" Turtleleaf exploded. Her expression was stormy and she actually looked furious. Not to mention all her anger was directed at Frostheart. "Recount their entire conversation, your thoughts on what they said, now. Don't leave anything out. I want to know as much as you do! I'm sick of

suddenly hearing new information and being the only one clueless around here."

To be honest, Frostheart really disliked Turtleleaf by this point. She was annoying and arrogant, like she expected that Frostheart had to oblige just because she was younger and a fellow prophecy cat. Frostheart wanted with all of her heart to shout a big fat no, but of course, she didn't want to completely ruin her ties with the other prophecy cats. She wasn't sure what to make of Flamewing yet. He seemed friendly enough, jittery too, but his part of the prophecy was bringing destruction, which didn't seem to suit his character. Streamlight of course seemed to already be fitting the prophecy, as she held up a paw to try and calm down Turtleleaf, who looked on the verge of lunging at Frostheart.

Turtleleaf gave Streamlight a quick glare, then snapped at Frostheart, "Well, come on! Spit it all out. I want to know every last detail, no matter how tiny it is."

Frostheart smiled cruelly, inwardly, and began describing the medicine cats' pelts, eye colors, and accents in detail. All of the prophecy cats were looking slightly infuriated by this point, so she started telling the story of their friendly greetings, hellos, tail flicks, whatever. Expression changes, she nailed them all. Then she recounted the prophecy to them, the way the medicine cats had pieced it together. But they already knew the prophecy, so of course, this wasn't anything new, and they were looking even more infuriated.

"Will you GET ON WITH IT!" Turtleleaf shouted.

Suddenly, every cat in the gathering's eyes were on Turtleleaf and their small group. Mousestar stared down at her, his whiskers twitching in either amusement or annoyance. "Be quiet. Do not speak out of turn. This is a time for friendly gossip or chatter, not a time to be yelling at cats from other Clans."

Turtleleaf hung her head in shame, her cheeks having a faint pink tinge to them. Great StarClan, Turtleleaf was blushing! When did that happen? Because she was embarrassed now? Honestly, it made her face look more passable for a cat's.

"Well, with your insufferable attitude, I've decided not to tell you," Frostheart meowed, and with her nose high in the air, she stalked away from the group. She'd had enough of this prophecy business. If anything was going to go on, she wanted to be in charge of it. She'd do it all herself, if this was what they'd be like. Maybe she'd join with Streamlight. She wouldn't mind working with Flamewing, but his part of the prophecy was disturbing.

She settled back down next to Skyfeather, and felt him give a slight jerk as he was startled. "What, you thought I was never going to come back to the SummerClan side?" Frostheart teased, her eyes glimmering with amusement.

Skyfeather relaxed visibly and he gave a small chuckle. "No, of course not. You can't just bump me and expect to get away with it!"

Frostheart rolled her eyes at him. "Of course I can't. I have to ask you for permission!" she said, her voice heavy with sarcasm. Skyfeather purred back.

They took the short way back to camp because Amberfrost was getting sicker by the minute. The night's cold hadn't contributed to helping cure her whitecough - in fact, it might well be turning into greencough by the minute, so the whole Clan was hanging quite far behind Amberfrost, trying not to be within reach of each of her numerous coughs.

"By - *cough* - next gathering - *cough* - Stonestar will - *cough* - have - *cough* - to lead you - *cough* -," Amberfrost coughed out. The whole Clan gave her a blank stare, but for some reason, as always, Frostheart was the only one who had a voice.

"And if he doesn't want to lead us?" she meowed quizzically. He hadn't wanted to come this time, why would he come next gathering? He was indeed a pathetic leader, and next gathering, he might deny all claims that he'd had greencough! He'd probably have exposed Amberfrost for not telling the truth. He was that kind of cat, even though she'd done it for the greater good. The other Clans would never have to know, but he'd make sure they did. All the other leaders had seen how sickly Amberfrost was that night. If the next gathering, they weren't led by leader or deputy, surely they

would understand.

"He - *cough* - will have - *cough* - to," Amberfrost snapped back stubbornly. Like she expected Stonestar would have an objective to lead the Clan. What nonsense was that?! But Frostheart didn't dare tell her otherwise, because it seemed like the only strong hope the deputy was clinging on to - that Stonestar would lead the Clan and be the strong leader Sunstar thought he would be.

They reached camp and just met a coughing fit. Every cat who'd stayed in camp seemed to have greencough. Windpaw, Cloudpaw, pretty much every warrior.... all coughing.

Frostheart groaned. "How am I going to sleep tonight with all that racket?"

Skyfeather stared incredulously at her. "You mean, you aren't worried for the sick cats? What about Cloudpaw and Windpaw? Your brothers?"

Frostheart stared flatly back at him. "Skyfeather, you shouldn't try to hang out with me before you know that particular piece of information. Why do you think I never talk to them? Well, face it, we're related by blood but NOT IN REAL LIFE." She stalked away. Seriously, even when she thought he was starting to be nice and he might just be her only friend, he was careless about that even! That OBVIOUS PIECE OF INFORMATION that all of her friends and would-be friends ALL KNEW. Why, StarClan, why? Why were cats so insensitive? Okay, she got why he was surprised she was worried about her good night's sleep and not the sick cats' lives. That was probably quite bad of her to say that, anyway. But to assume she'd be worried about her NOT-BROTHERS! That was plain stupid.

*Frostheart, do you want to meet tonight?* came Streamlight's cool voice through the telepathic communication.

*Are you kidding, Streamlight? We just met tonight! Also, my entire Clan's full of sick cats, they're coughing all night and I bet every cat will be awake,* Frostheart grumbled. She looked around, just to make sure she wasn't staring into space like last time.

*Oh, alright then. Goodnight!* Streamlight's jovial voice came through and Frostheart thought she even caught a snippet of a yawn.

Frostheart sighed and buried herself in her nest. She noticed it was rather far away from everybody else's. Whoever had made her nest clearly knew a thing or two about her. She smiled slightly in contempt before falling asleep, regardless of the coughs and snores.

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Tap. "Dawn patrol?" came a voice.

Frostheart rolled over with a groan. "Give me a break! I went to the gathering."

It was the merciless face of Grassfeather. He had that grumpy look to him - that grumpy look he always had, and he wasn't pleased with her objection.

"Frostheart, you're one of the only healthy cats left in the Clan. Get on with-"

"AUTUMNCLAN, ATTACK!"

That really jolted Frostheart awake. AutumnClan cats charged into SummerClan's camp, their unsheathed claws scraping the soft soil and making noise. They were headed straight for the leader's den. Of course, they would find no good leader there - just Stonestar, the pathetic leader Sunstar probably regretted choosing. The real leader was Amberfrost and she was in the medicine den, sick.

Frostheart spotted Turtleleaf among the AutumnClan warriors, and she had the same murderous expression as all of them.

"Turtleleaf, stop!" Frostheart hissed, tackling her to the ground with sheathed claws.

"You're too soft! Prophecy cat or not, I'm loyal to my Clan and I'll join them in any battle they start!" Turtleleaf snarled, slashing at Frostheart with unsheathed claws. Frostheart didn't want to end the prophecy, but what choice did she have? She unsheathed her claws as well, slashing as furiously at Turtleleaf's face, but then

Turtleleaf's Clanmate - a tom named Barkwhisker - jumped in and battled her off. Frostheart watched him in amusement. That desperation in his eyes - he knew Frostheart had been about to kill Turtleleaf. He probably was in love with Turtleleaf or something, which was quite the amusing prospect. Some cat would love Turtleleaf? Really?

Frostheart found herself outnumbered five to one, and she was fighting for her life, barely landing any blows. She found herself dodging most of the time and she barely slashed her claws at any cat at all. Which was probably good - she didn't like to have to kill any more than she had to. But this was shameful, pitting five cats up against her, and yet they could do it because all of SummerClan's warriors were too sick to help. So, unfair as it was, under these circumstances, it was normal, and she was actually doing quite well by not dying. Skyfeather was fighting five as well, and he was bloody. Badly injured and yet holding up. Frostheart knew she couldn't let him die. For some reason, she felt that way, and it wasn't just because he was a Clanmate. It was something else, something she couldn't quite name.

With a sudden burst of strength and power, Frostheart lashed out at the five attacking her. She hit one hard in the head with her hind leg, knocking him out and sending him reeling. She hadn't had to kill one of them, but the following two were killed with slashes across their necks, smashing their windpipes. The last two were thrown into a tree. They might have a concussion after that, but she hadn't killed them! Just doomed them to life in misery, the useless cat in the Clan. She wasn't even sure if AutumnClan would take them back. She'd killed two of their warriors and they probably didn't want to bring two more useless warriors back. But the initial pain and guilt of killing cats that had haunted her moons ago was gone now, which was good and bad. She could kill without pain, but that meant, what would ever stop her from killing?

She leapt in just before an AutumnClan warrior could deal the final blow to Skyfeather, finishing off the circle of five cats around him. This time, she didn't spare any lives. She couldn't afford to - Skyfeather was dying on the ground in front of her! Four perished and she cornered the leader of the mini group. It looked like

AutumnClan's deputy, Clovertail. She had that same murderous gleam in her eyes like every single cat in her Clan, like she really did want to kill them.

"What is this for?" Frostheart hissed. Skyfeather could survive a few moments longer, and he was already having the sense to try and crawl to the medicine den on his own. Good for him. At least he had some common sense.

"This?" Clovertail looked confused, but Frostheart couldn't tell whether it was feigned or real.

"Attacking us. Killing us. Majority of us are sick. Why must you make the remainder injured or dead?" Frostheart demanded. After this, she'd probably be the only cat on patrols, and she didn't have the same knack for hunting as she did for fighting. Every other cat was sick or injured by now.

"SummerClan must collapse and bow to AutumnClan. Some leaders have had the message of uniting. I'm not sure if Stonestar did too - is that what is disturbing him and keeping him in his den? Perhaps, perhaps. Well, we don't mind uniting - but the entire SeasonClan must be under AutumnClan's thumb." She glared mischievously down at Frostheart, batting her eyelashes. What was THAT for?! But Frostheart didn't dare say otherwise. The leaders had gotten a message about uniting SeasonClan?! Well, not only had Stonestar not even said anything, but he'd moped around in his den and wasn't even helping in this battle! He was a wasted leader. Sure, maybe he was disturbed by all these... things going on, the prophecy, this new message, WHATSOEVER, but he shouldn't have ditched his Clan like that, he was leader! And even as they struggled, he was probably sleeping in his den! This was horrible!

"HELP! HELP US!" There was a scream, and Frostheart peeled her eyes away from Clovertail for a split second.

That was all it took for the AutumnClan deputy to lunge at her throat and attempt to slit it. But a lucky step backwards saved Frostheart's life. She'd almost died! Well, if Clovertail had all intentions of killing her, then she had no trouble killing her! Frostheart lunged for Clovertail, and this time, there was no lucky

backward step to save her. Clovertail died strangled in Frostheart's claws, her windpipe severed by Frostheart's teeth. It was still disturbing, that sudden pool out of blood, but it was oddly satisfying. Frostheart then turned her eyes, her ears perking, to the sound of the scream.

Duskcloud and Shimmerpelt were holding the fort to the nursery, fighting eight warriors between the two of them. *Well, that's strange. There are no kits or queens in the nursery, why are they defending it?* Frostheart wondered in confusion. Then she noticed that Shimmerpelt's stomach was bulging and she was looking oddly fatigued, like she'd been tired even before the battle started. She must have been expecting for quite some time! Frostheart ran over to join them, throwing two warriors aside. They smashed into the same tree she'd thrown the other two warriors into. She heard a loud crack emitted from one of them - cracked skull. Well, he was dead. The other cat probably just had a concussion, but who was she to worry? They'd tried to kill Duskcloud and Shimmerpelt! An expecting queen no less!

Frostheart dashed into the fray, killing two more warriors in one jump, leaving four more. She ended up facing off with three, while Duskcloud faced one. Shimmerpelt had collapsed out of exhaustion, and seeing her, Frostheart realized she had completely forgotten Skyfeather. But he was gone from sight, so hopefully he had managed to crawl his way to the medicine den. He hadn't been far from it anyway.

The three warriors were easy pickings after she'd faced two rounds of five and one round of four. They fell in a flurry of claws and snapping teeth. Duskcloud defeated his as well - he was a gifted warrior indeed, though nowhere as gifted as Frostheart. He just had enough skill to defeat someone where it seemed he was evenly matched.

"Is Shimmerpelt okay?" Frostheart asked worriedly. The silver queen had fainted!

"I'm not sure," Duskcloud meowed, as anxious as Frostheart if not more anxious, and Frostheart realized he must be her mate. "She's only a half-moon away from kitting, and that was overexertion

there. No queen should have to fight when they're so close to kitting! Could you take her to the medicine den? I'll need to assist in the fighting."

Frostheart fixed him with a hard stare. "You're a good warrior, Duskcloud, but right now, I think I'll be more useful in the fighting. Take Shimmerpelt to the medicine den. Oh, and, if you don't mind, could you check if Skyfeather is there, too? If he isn't, you might need to rescue him. He could be bleeding out somewhere on the field. Thanks!" She turned tail and ran, unsure why she'd just given a senior warrior a whole bunch of instructions. Well, he wasn't senior, exactly, but he was senior to her. She shook the thought of and ran back to fight. But there were no fights anymore. But that meant... only three warriors and a queen had been fighting against - she made a quick headcount - eighteen warriors?! And she had definitely seen twenty, along with Mousestar at their head. Which meant...

Her head snapped in the direction of Stonestar's den. No doubt they were confronting him there. Although... should she let him die? He was a rather awful leader anyway, and perhaps StarClan would cure Amberfrost's sickness if she became leader. Regardless, she had to remain loyal even if he was an awful leader. Nervously, she crept into his den, her eyes peeled for any signs of danger.

But no, there was no fighting in his den. Mousestar was speaking to Stonestar with two warriors behind him, backing him.

"Are you sure you want to lead this Clan? You seem awfully uncertain. None of your Clanmates seem to like you. You're never around for them. I bet they hold no respect for you. You haven't been much of a leader, have you?" A smile curled around Mousestar's lips. "However, I am a great leader. Your Clanmates will live great lives under me, and that's all you want, isn't it? You want them to live happily, but you can't do that yourself. That's why you have to leave them to me. I'll take good care of them, and they'll all love me, parade around me. No cat does that for you, do they?"

"You really think they would?" Stonestar's exhausted voice was still filled with rebellion. "After you slaughtered them? And how many cats have you left outside for you to lead? You've probably killed all

the healthy cats. The rest are sick and weak, and I bet you made them fight, too! Who is left? Who left won't remember what you've done to them? You wrecked them, Mousestar. They don't like me because I'm a pretty absent leader, but at least I didn't kill them to obtain my leadership."

"That's not a very good point to be fighting for," Mousestar meowed, still smiling. "You're an absent leader, indeed. No cat likes you, indeed."

"But they will fight. Not for me, but for the Clan. And if they fought for either of us, it would be me over you. At least I'm a SummerClan cat!" With that, Stonestar lunged straight for Mousestar, tackling him to the ground. But Mousestar was no weakling, and he was a match for Stonestar. Stonestar would never last against Mousestar along with his two bodyguards.

With a start, Frostheart found herself leaping into the fray, tackling the two bodyguards to the ground. One of them was Turtleleaf, and Frostheart found herself heartlessly killing Turtleleaf's Clanmate before pinning the tortoiseshell she-cat to the ground.

"You know, Skytail told me the other prophecy cat would be Cloudpaw," Turtleleaf mused. "And then it's you. And you're so much more deadly, but like this, how are you going to 'save us all'? You're killing us."

"Actually, it says save you all. And it was delivered to Hawkfeather, a SummerClan medicine cat. I'll save SummerClan. I never had to save any other Clan, and technically, by practically exterminating AutumnClan, I am saving SpringClan and WinterClan from facing the same fate as us! So yes, I am saving my Clan. It's just too bad it wasn't yours as well!" Frostheart knew that was an ideal time to leap in and finish Turtleleaf off, but she couldn't bring herself to. Sure, she hated Turtleleaf enough to do it by now, but she hated to think what might happen if the prophecy wasn't fulfilled. It Turtleleaf didn't bring the flames, did that mean the destruction in Flamewing's part would be stronger, weaker, or nonexistent? Frostheart seriously had no idea, and she didn't want to risk it.

"How many of your Clanmates remained in camp?" Frostheart

hissed, and for a moment Turtleleaf's eyes were pained.

"Two queens, Skytail, and Leafstreak," Turtleleaf meowed.

"All your warriors came to this attack?" Frostheart meowed in surprise. Then all that killing she'd done... she'd wrecked AutumnClan when they came to wreck SummerClan!

"Yes. You murdered them all. And in turn..." Turtleleaf gave her a sideways glance. "I'll murder you."

**Word count: 3593**

**A significantly longer chapter, hopefully worth your time, just ended with a cliffhanger, haha! But I think you all at least know Frostheart's outcome! (Yeah, it's kind of a spoiler when the name of this book says 'Froststar' and she's still Frostheart right now.... lol. Bye for now! I'm so pumped to write this book!**

**~ Frostwind88**

# Chapter Ten

Frostheart stared at Turtleleaf, her heart pumping ten times as fast as it should be. She couldn't kill Turtleleaf because she was part of the prophecy, but apparently, that wasn't going to stop Turtleleaf from killing her. Was this tortoiseshell she-cat, who looked gentle on the outside, really a monster on the inside? Then, could it be the same for Flamewing? Perhaps there was more to them than met the eye. Frostheart stared at Turtleleaf, and slowly her expression, which had been a mixture of fear and anger, slowly melted into confidence.

"But you won't kill me," she meowed simply, and she knew it was true. Turtleleaf hadn't killed anyone in her life, she definitely wouldn't be able to bring herself to kill a cat who wasn't fighting back. "Try it, won't you? You can't kill me. You're too weak."

Turtleleaf reached out with her claws, swiping in the same fluid motion Frostheart had used so many times to slit necks, but sure enough, her paw faltered, and dropped like a cold stone. She couldn't kill, despite her threats. She was too weak, and she couldn't bring herself to kill any cat.

*That's where I was, moons ago, before my conscience left me,* Frostheart thought. True, she hadn't missed her conscience very much. If not, today, she'd have faltered so much all her Clanmates would have died. She would kill if she had to. But this time, she didn't have to. Because Turtleleaf wasn't threatening her life.

"We're prophecy cats, Turtleleaf," Frostheart meowed simply. "I don't know if your part is good or bad, but we should be friends, and we have to stick together."

Turtleleaf stared weakly back at Frostheart. "That's not how this kind of thing works! I'll bring the flames. We all thought that referred to Flamewing, but what if it's actual flames?"

Realization dawned on Frostheart. Why had Turtleleaf appeared

once at the start and then disappeared? Unless she was setting fire to the forest? "What? How could you! What did we ever do to you?" she growled.

Turtleleaf shrugged. "I knew about my problem, that I could never kill a cat flailing beneath my claws. But burning up your forest? Oh, that won't kill anybody. You'll just run out of food, and then you'll starve." A sly smile crept onto her face.

"Well, if that's it!" Frostheart snarled. "If that's your part of the prophecy, and there's nothing more to it, then what reason do I have not to kill you?"

"Didn't you say the same thing? We're prophecy cats! We should be friends and stick together," Turtleleaf mimicked Frostheart's voice, and Frostheart realized Turtleleaf was turning her words against her.

"Sure, I did say that. But your part of the prophecy is over. That means you aren't important any longer." Frostheart lunged straight for Turtleleaf, but the wily tortoiseshell dodged.

Turtleleaf looked back and said few words before she left. "I'll bring the flames, remember? No cat said how many!" She turned tail and ran.

Stonestar had battled off Mousestar too. He looked like he had died, because he was perfectly unharmed, only his pelt was a little ruffled. "What has happened to the Clan outside?" he asked, his voice hollow.

"That doesn't matter," Frostheart meowed. "I believe the forest may be on fire."

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Turtleleaf's plan was successfully foiled. She had told Frostheart about the fire too early on, and had given her and the Clan time to put it out. Still, it ruined Dark Rocks, which were always cool and shrouded in shade. Now they were burning hot, the cool grass beside it charred and blackened. The fire had ruined only a certain

part of their forest, but they could only imagine what it would've been like if Turtleleaf hadn't been kind enough to warn them.

"This is catastrophic!" Stonestar breathed. "Every cat sick! Every other cat injured! Sick cats injured!"

"Yeah, well, what did you do?" Frostheart challenged. "I killed a lot of AutumnClan warriors while you moped in your den until Mousestar came! What kind of leader are you?"

"I was considering some things, all that time you thought I was moping!" Stonestar fired back. "It was too disturbing even to go to the gathering. You heard Mousestar, you were hiding there! StarClan wants us to unite. But that will mean we have to give up our leadership and pass it to somebody. Mousestar wants to lead it, and he's going to kill all the leaders so he can unite and lead the great SeasonClan once more."

"No cat will submit to him! And look! We killed almost all their warriors!" Frostheart complained.

"These are their warriors, yes. But I had a vision of rogues coming in, joining his forces. Rogue numbers always seem unlimited, don't they? Imagine if that all was on his side. Now that all his warriors are pretty much dead, he will turn to them, they will assist him, and we will all fall." Stonestar breathed in a sharp breath. He looked haggard, yet he held himself with much pride. This was the leader Sunstar had seen, the leader who had failed to show his true colors.

"We will not fall!" Frostheart insisted. Why would they fall?!

"Help rebuild camp, Frostheart. You and I may well be the only cats strong enough to do so," Stonestar meowed gravely.

Frostheart first went to check on the cats in the  medicine den. There were so many of them, the less serious had been moved out to the clearing. Frostheart saw the injured and expecting Shimmerpelt in the 'not so serious' clearing, and stared. Didn't they need to care for her and be mindful of what this might have done to her kits? The medicine cats were always thorough, so if even after this, they still thought she wasn't serious... then who was serious?

She didn't spot Skyfeather among the cats in the clearing, and her heart gave a jolt.

Frostheart entered the medicine den nervously. She knew they weren't allowing visitors at that point, so she asked, "I was wondering, may I be of help? I know you two are working your paws off."

Honeyleaf and Hawkfeather looked up from where they were either mixing poultices, throwing bandages to each other, passing marigold and horsetail back and forth, or doing so many other things. Sure enough, they looked very fatigued.

"Do you even know herbs?" Honeyleaf snapped.

"Um... I've seen some stuff. Cobwebs for bleeding, marigold for infection, horsetail for infection, poppy seeds for pain... those are the basics, right?" Frostheart asked.

Honeyleaf looked mildly impressed. "Most don't pick up that much. But I can't trust your hands, however we are running out of cobwebs and marigold, could you take a... never mind, could you go get some?"

Frostheart almost caught Honeyleaf asking her to take another warrior with her, but there was no other warrior, and she dipped her head in response, glancing around the den to find Skyfeather before she left.

"You're looking for somebody, are you?" Honeyleaf asked. "Well, it's undoubtedly not Windpaw and Cloudpaw. Who is it, Skyfeather?"

Frostheart gave a shy nod. Did every cat know? They weren't exactly obvious. But she did worry for him. And he obviously cared for her. Maybe it was Skyfeather being obvious! Frostheart shook her head wryly.

"You're right, it's Skyfeather. Is he okay? Did he make it? I left him to help Duskcloud and Shimmerpelt," Frostheart explained the reason for her worry. "Plus he was losing a lot of blood," she added as an afterthought.

"Yes, he's fine. Pale, weak from blood loss, but overall, he's fine. But I do need cobwebs! Could you hurry up and go do that? Marigold too, remember?" Honeyleaf asked impatiently.

Typical Honeyleaf, no patience! Frostheart purred in amusement and hurried out into the forest. She passed Stonestar on the way out and conveniently ignored him. She was supposed to be repairing camp with him right now, but that should be the least of his worries! Cats were dying! Luckily, and strangely, no SummerClan cat had died from that assault by AutumnClan. SummerClan was really very lucky, because AutumnClan had lost most of their warriors.

Frostheart found cobwebs and marigold quite easily. She'd seen these patches before, anyway. She kind of wished she did have a fellow warrior or apprentice, because Honeyleaf needed a lot and she wasn't even the true age of a warrior yet. She was around nine moons, named a warrior by chance!

"Ugh, too much stuff, and I can't even leave it because it's important!" Frostheart grumbled.

"Oh, I didn't see you there! Hi, Frostheart!" Streamlight meowed with one of her bright smiles.

"Streamlight? Why are you here? Don't you know that's trespassing?" Frostheart whispered.

"I'm not, silly! I'm right by the border! Anyway, I'm sure you don't need that much. Honeyleaf and Hawkfeather must be crazy to ask one warrior to carry that much herbs!" Streamlight giggled. Frostheart stared. Funny? It wasn't... Oh, well, it probably was for her.

"We were attacked by AutumnClan, and Stonestar and I are the only uninjured cats, so I'm here. Helping them," Frostheart explained, "by gathering herbs, you know, to treat their injuries. Also, a lot of them are sick."

"Do you need help? That's a big load," Streamlight meowed, concerned.

"Oh. Sure, I guess," Frostheart meowed. She'd be able to explain the SpringClan scent like this, anyway, if everyone saw Streamlight walk in with the herbs. And SpringClan was just about the most peaceful Clan, so she should be alright. It was no danger.

Streamlight gave her a small smile before skipping over the border. "You get the cobwebs, I don't like getting sticky."

Frostheart gave her a playful glare before gathering the cobwebs. Sure enough, they stuck to her body. She was all sticky, but Streamlight reeked of marigold, and Frostheart decided she preferred being sticky to that.

She came back to camp, and Stonestar was pacing. "WHERE WERE YOU?!" he roared at her, causing Streamlight to jump backwards. "AND WHY IS THERE A SPRINGCLAN CAT IN OUR CAMP?!"

"Wait! Calm down! The medicine cats were low on supplies, so I helped them gather some herbs by the SpringClan border. I met Streamlight, and she came to help me!" Frostheart explained.

"WELL, I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO GO HERB GATHERING, DID I? I ASKED YOU TO HELP ME REBUILD CAMP!" Stonestar roared.

"Calm down!" came a snarl. Honeyleaf burst out of the medicine den, baring her teeth at him. "I needed those herbs! The whole Clan needs those herbs more than they need repaired dens! And will you stop yelling! Do you not see her helping?" Honeyleaf gestured wildly to Streamlight. "She's not trespassing! I'm pretty sure she didn't sneak in here to assassinate somebody while reeking of marigold." Honeyleaf rolled her eyes at Stonestar. "Sorry about that," she added quietly to Streamlight. Frostheart nodded sympathetically.

"S-sure. But... I think I should probably go now." Her eagerness and willingness to help earlier seemed to have evaporated, and she was quickly backing away, leaving the marigold in clumps on the ground. "B-bye! G-glad to be of h-help!" she stuttered as she floundered away.

"See what you did? She was a kind soul, willing to help, and you

scared her away!" Honeyleaf snarled.

"We don't need help from other Clans! Have you forgotten who attacked us?" Stonestar snarled.

"Have YOU forgotten who LET THAT HAPPEN?!" Frostheart snarled back, her voice drowning out the reply from Honeyleaf. "Who let it happen?! Oh, it was you, wasn't it? The poor leader, sleeping in his den while dreaming about your prophecy and message from StarClan! That's more useful than leading your Clan, isn't it? Also, you got a message, and you NEVER TOLD HONEYLEAF. Well, that was INCREDIBLY SMART! So will you FORGIVE US if practically EVERY CAT IN CAMP HATES YOU NOW!"

Stonestar froze beneath Frostheart's crushing violet stare. "When we heard about the snow-white cat supposed to save us all... Skytail said it wouldn't be you, but no cat believed him. But I understand now... it is Cloudpaw. How are you supposed to save us all?"

Frostheart froze. "Well, I think I have at least a better chance than Cloudpaw. And you weren't like this when I was your 'bodyguard', were you? You practically adored me after I almost single-handedly defeated everyone back then. You named me a warrior early. And just now. I nearly single-handedly defeated every AutumnClan warrior in camp! And what is this? You see? I don't get any respect from doing good for the Clan. Instead, the ex-moping leader now tells me I'm not part of the prophecy!"

"You knew about it?" Honeyleaf demanded, her whisper barely audible.

"Of course I did. I'm probably not the only cat who eavesdropped on your conversation. I was right inside the den!" Frostheart exploded.

"But... she was in the right place at the right time, everything. She saved the Clan from AutumnClan. I think that's reason enough to believe she's part of the prophecy, isn't it, Stonestar?" Honeyleaf asked hopelessly.

Frostheart narrowed her eyes and watched Stonestar expectantly. The leader finally gave a shuddering sigh. "Perhaps." He moved

away, and turned his back on them. "But that doesn't change the fact that I wish it WASN'T YOU."

**Word count: 2162**

# Chapter Eleven

Frostheart wasn't exactly sure what had gone on, but now the entire Clan was trying very hard to include Cloudpaw in everything and make him feel special. He was clearly at a loss of what to do with all that extra attention, but since he was Windpaw's lackey, Windpaw got to bask in all that attention too, and he was clearly enjoying it, while his brother, the main receiver of the attention, was always looking lost.

They themselves should be becoming warriors soon, and Frostheart knew she should be happy for them, but it was just so difficult. They were not really her brothers anymore, and so much time had been lost. But recently, Cloudpaw had been constantly glancing her way, seeing her expressions and reactions to certain things, as if trying to get to know her better. She completely understood, of course. She and him had never hated each other, it was only Windpaw driving them apart.

But, actually, Stormwind had encouraged her to do that, too.

With a jolt, Frostheart realized that in all this trouble, she hadn't even thought about Stormwind for the past moon or so. Did that mean she was finally letting her sworn sister go? It seemed awful. She shouldn't forget her sworn sister/best friend! Was she an awful cat?! But, then again, her time with Stormwind had been so short, and they had actually... barely known each other. If Stormwind had known Frostheart was a murderer, she definitely wouldn't have dared gone near her. Well, not true - she was always an adventurous cat. But still, she would definitely have been more wary. Was the Stormwind as Frostheart knew her a lie? They'd barely scratched the surface of talking about themselves. Only what adventure they could have next. And it had all ended before it had even began.

It was sad, really, but Frostheart found she didn't need Stormwind for life anymore. Stormwind was history, a distant, previously vital part of herself, but not anymore. Now she was okay without her

sworn sister. Perhaps life was finally looking up. But as she looked into the camp clearing, where Cloudpaw's mentor had quickly brought him out to hunt the moment he'd complained about apprentice duties, she found a frown worming its way onto her face. They were pampering him, spoiling him. He was going to become a pampered pooch, like a kittypet! What were they doing to him? They were corrupting her brother!

She would have clapped her paws over her thoughts, if she could! He WAS NOT HER BROTHER. But why did she still think of him as her brother?! Now Stonestar was trying to get him to take her place as the prophecy cat, something she had DEFINITELY OBJECTED TO. But he was doing it anyway, even though Cloudpaw was by no means special at all. He was an ordinary apprentice, average, nothing special about him at all. Oh, apart from the fact that he had a crush on Twilightmoon who was like eons older than him. That was all.

"Frostheart! Come here."

Was Honeyleaf calling her? Well, that was highly irregular. Frostheart found her brow furrowing as she hurried over to the medicine den, confused.

"I wanted to ask you a question," Honeyleaf meowed in a matter-of-factly fashion. "Would you permit me to?"

"What? I'm not your Clan leader or something. You don't need my permission to ask a question. Actually, you don't need my permission to do anything. So why do you ask for it?" Frostheart asked, even more confused than when she'd started out. Medicine cats! Always confusing the cats they talked to. Perhaps this was why forbidden relationships with the medicine cats occurred so rarely, and more commonly were medicine cat to medicine cat. Because no one else could understand them! She tried her best not to put on her exasperated face. That would definitely annoy Honeyleaf.

"Oh, but I didn't want you to shred me," Honeyleaf put in mildly. "Never mind, here's the question. Have you ever thought of becoming a medicine cat?"

"Are you headhunting?" Frostheart asked with a slight growl. "This is because your past two apprentices died, isn't it?"

"Well, partly so," Honeyleaf meowed, giving her chest fur a few embarrassed licks. "Also because I am ageing, and you have talent. You knew all the basic herbs even though you barely ever watch us do it. How did you know them?"

"You pick them up eventually. See it once, ooh, it's kind of cool, stays in your head, you lose obsession, drop it, but it's still there," Frostheart explained. Once, when she was like two moons old, she had wanted to become a medicine cat. But barely three days later, she'd realized how foolish she'd been. Medicine cats never did anything interesting. Yes, they were important because they saved lives of dying cats and all, but it was a rather boring life. Handle herbs, do apprentice duties sometimes, talk to each other when nothing was going on, receive prophecies, blah blah blah!

"Okay. So, would you?" Honeyleaf asked. "Become a medicine cat?"

"You really want me to convert over? Medicine cats don't really fight, you know. And I think I'm a pretty good fighter," Frostheart meowed.

Honeyleaf winced. "Oh, definitely. You are a devastating fighter. But that's not what the Clan needs. The Clan needs peace, and I feel that can only be accomplished if you become a medicine cat."

"Well, that's really great. Next time AutumnClan attacks, have fun dying!" Frostheart exploded.

"Frostheart. Be serious. I am being totally serious with you. This is no joke. I really feel being a medicine cat is your destiny," Honeyleaf persisted.

"But... I always imagined being leader someday," Frostheart mumbled, and she was repeating almost every kit's dream.

"That's funny. You do know that almost every kit who says they want to be leader as a kit doesn't end up leader? Half of them don't want to be leader by apprenticeship, and another quarter drops that

obsession by warriorhood. You are technically still apprentice age. The obsession will fall, I promise. Especially when you see the joys of being a medicine cat!" A jovial smile slid onto the grumpy golden she-cat's face, and light illuminated her features for a moment. She genuinely believed that being a medicine cat was lucky, fascinating, and the best job in the world. Seriously? Well, she'd been a medicine cat from the start. She'd never experienced being a warrior!

"I guess I could consider. Although I seriously don't expect it to work out. Also, how is this uniting thing going to continue?" Frostheart asked nervously. "Are we actually going to unite this entire Clan? After all, StarClan asked that, but it's kind of impossible, right? And didn't we divide only twenty seasons ago? Or forty?"

Honeyleaf gave a long sigh. "I know. It seems like we've barely begun living separate lives, but it's now time to end. We were never meant to break up, and it was sibling rivalries that led to this. But SeasonClan must be united. The four seasons don't continue without each other, and neither shall we, the four Clans."

"If AutumnClan's taking in rogues, we're not exactly a Clan either," Frostheart huffed.

"The rogues are AutumnClan's future. All of their Clanborn warriors are dead, so the rogues are actually their only hope. It's kind of sad." Honeyleaf shook her head dismissively. "Anyway, consider the offer, Frostheart. Hawkfeather and I are both growing old"

"You mean you are growing old. Hawkfeather is still young! He's Amberfrost's brother, and Amberfrost isn't even that old!" Frostheart whined.

Honeyleaf shot her a look. "Yes, I am the one growing old. *DO NOT RUB IT IN*. Anyway, consider my offer. Okay?"

"Okay, I suppose," Frostheart muttered. She was almost one hundred percent sure she was not going to agree to it. Who in their right mind transferred to become a medicine cat?! That was plain stupid. From the brilliant, exciting life of a warrior, transfer to the

dim and boring life of a medicine cat? Well, frankly, that decision wasn't going to be made. No way was she going to become a medicine cat, ever!

The more tiny part of her whispered, What about Skyfeather? That was really stupid, that was never going to work out. And he was almost as ancient as Twilightmoon! Okay, to be fair, he was a LOT younger than Twilightmoon. But still. She'd teased Cloudpaw about his crush recently. What would he say when he heard about hers, not that much younger than his crush? They hadn't been talking much (as in her and Cloudpaw), but they were more like friends now. They were still not siblings - that bond was never going to repair - but maybe she could start treating him like a Clanmate. Only him, though. She hated Windpaw with every fibre of her body, and that bond, even as a Clanmate, was never going to develop.

"Oh, by the way, did you need help looking after the injured?" Frostheart asked.

Honeyleaf's eyes glimmered. "You see, you're interested."

"Well, I don't want to be repairing dens, you see," Frostheart explained with an embarrassed smile.

"Well, I'd love to have you. But right now, you need to hunt. For the entire Clan," Honeyleaf meowed. "It's a pity Stonestar chased Streamlight away. She could have helped you. StarClan sent us a willing pair of paws to help, and our cursed leader when and chased her away." The old medicine cat glowered at the ground. "I'll send you a not-so-injured cat. Hm. HAWKFEATHER! WHO THERE ISN'T VERY INJURED?!"

"I don't know! What's not injured? Head wounds? Broken paw? Broken leg? Ex-dislocated leg?!" Hawkfeather shouted desperately back.

"WHOA! Never mind! I'll go on my own!" Frostheart quickly cried and then dashed out of camp. She could take Stonestar, she supposed, not that she wanted to. She found Streamlight waiting not too far outside camp and frowned. "Um, Streamlight? I thought you were going back to SpringClan," she meowed.

"Yeah. Um. I don't know how. You know, I don't know your forest," Streamlight explained wryly. "I didn't want to shout in case Stonestar came back. Is he gone, by the way?"

"Repairing dens. I'm going to need to hunt for the entire Clan. Do you think you could help me?" Frostheart asked.

Streamlight's eyes lit up. "Of course! I'll do anything to be of help! You'll just need to tell me where to go and all. Good thing we both live in the same kind of forest!"

"Good thing indeed!" Frostheart agreed, smiling.

She and Streamlight hunted until nightfall, bringing back several batches of prey. Frostheart and Streamlight were both exhausted, but thankfully, Streamlight stuck with her until way after nightfall. She and Streamlight had eaten the second batch of prey, and the third, because otherwise, they would be too hungry to hunt.

By the time they were all done hunting, Streamlight was hopping from one foot to another nervously.

"Hey, are you alright? You won't get scolded for staying away, will you? I thought you said Springstar was understanding," Frostheart meowed in a cross whisper. Most of the camp was asleep by now, including the two medicine cats, who had fallen asleep the moment they'd crashed onto their nests, shortly after gobbling up their dinner.

"Springstar is understanding. But the other warriors might get mad. Berryshine, my sister, will definitely be annoyed." Streamlight explained. "She and I like to do late-night outings which are totally against the rules, but anyway, one was tonight. It's our birthday today. No one cares about that sort of thing, but Berryshine is kind of crazy enthusiastic? I think she wanted me home the entire day, you should have seen her! When Berryshine is obsessed, she is crazy! She isn't gonna be glad I spent the whole night in SummerClan, at the very least. She's a nice cat, but when you don't do things her way, she gets annoyed."

"She sounds like Silverlight, are they related somehow?" Frostheart

teased. Streamlight looked faintly confused when Frostheart mentioned the name Silverlight, but SummerClan had mentioned her at the gathering (or so she'd been told, because she hadn't been at that gathering). Perhaps Streamlight hadn't been either, but then Frostheart's silver friend was nodding along unenthusiastically.

"I know. It's awful! Every time somebody brings up Silverlight, everyone automatically stares at Berryshine! She hasn't even done anything wrong," Streamlight meowed helplessly, and Frostheart was already regretting bringing it up. "Well, I need to get home now. Could you show me to the border?"

"Of course," Frostheart meowed distantly, and together, she and her only friend set off for the SpringClan border.

Word count: 2070

# Chapter Twelve

Frostheart admitted to a little reluctance to leave Streamlight, bid her goodbye at the SpringClan border. Streamlight was her only real friend at this point. Skyfeather didn't really count, she supposed. They hadn't talked much recently. Probably because he was confined strictly to the medicine den. Yeah, that was a reason. But instead of hunting for the Clan, Frostheart felt like she was hunting her energy reserves dry. She was eating a lot more than she used to, obviously not expecting kits like some random cat had teased her. She was just hunting way too much. Stonestar was the lone cat rebuilding dens and she was the lone cat hunting. At first rebuilding dens seemed useless, but in the end, Frostheart had to admit to a little gratitude. Being the only cat in the warriors' den, she could avoid the damp spots where the den leaked on damp days, but when it was storming, water flooded in in the buckets full. That couldn't be stopped, and she didn't sleep much on rainy nights, which was bad for her because rain or shine, she had to wake up at dawn in the morning and hunt the entire day away if she wanted to hunt enough for the Clan. Sometimes Stonestar helped her. Sometimes.

Hunting all day was hard enough in itself, but winter was at its edges, threatening to cut through autumn finally, and the cold air was giving everyone colds, even the already sick or injured. Actually, especially them. Frostheart remained one of the only two healthy cats, and Stonestar was only healthy because he'd lost a life and gotten revived. Frostheart knew she was healthy for now, but she was working herself ragged every day, and was quite prone to catch the illnesses going round. Honeyleaf and Hawkfeather worked tirelessly, but with the entire Clan under their care, they needed more than two pairs of paws, but two pairs of paws was all that was granted to them. They were getting increasingly annoyed and snappy, the patients were lonely, and they all had to move to the vacant elders' den, since the medicine cats couldn't afford to leave anyone out in the cold.

"This is catastrophic! We need help. Lots of help. Perhaps Stonestar or Frostheart could ask SpringClan for assistance," Honeyleaf suggested one day. Her nose was running, signs that she was sick as well. It was no wonder. She had been working herself ragged too, and the dark circles underneath her eyes showed she had hardly slept during the entire pandemic. And it hadn't even ended yet!

"Ask for help? Certainly not! SummerClan is strong!" Stonestar bellowed, and he answered anyone else's pleas for him to get help by baring his teeth threateningly at them and shouting at them for believing SummerClan was weak. "We are the strongest Clan in the forest!" he snarled to whoever would listen, meaning his victims to his yelling sprees. "This was merely a small setback! Nothing will ever make us weak!"

Unfortunately, no cat had the strength, time or energy to continue arguing with him. The sick cats had all the time in the world, as did the injured cats, but their bodies were recuperating and they had no energy to yell their heads off and debate with Stonestar, who never backed down to anything, not even concrete evidence. He spent his days marching around the place, eating prey he had not caught and yelling at whoever told him to do otherwise. Honeyleaf had tried to tell him off a few days back. She had been unsuccessful, and had now taken to gnashing her teeth in annoyance every time Stonestar so much as stepped into the medicine den. He wasn't pleased with her, but she was older than him, and he had nothing to say that she couldn't anticipate. Mainly he was just fairly frustrated with her, but he seemed to think his bodyguard, whom he considered Frostheart to be, could do a better job convincing her. That was what Frostheart thought when he approached her, anyway, but their cozy little meeting inside his den turned out to be quite the opposite.

"Honeyleaf expressed her wishes for you to become a medicine cat, Frostheart. I don't know if you've heard?" Stonestar spoke casually, pretending to be uninterested in the topic of conversation, but really, his gleaming eyes were searching her endless violets hungrily, searching her expression and her reaction. "I wasn't sure if you were truly considering this, after all the fighting potential you have shown?"

"I thought she was barking, to be honest," Frostheart admitted wryly. "Me, a medicine cat? I've killed and injured more cats than the rest of the Clan put together! Besides," she added, with a more accusing look targeted at Stonestar, "no one else's gonna hunt for the entire Clan if I'm off looking after the sick, will they? Unless we suddenly have volunteers?" She smiled rather nastily at Stonestar, expecting some reaction, but he smiled as serenely as ever, unaffected and uncaring.

"Now, I admit I have been rather absent," Stonestar agreed, still smiling, a little bashfully. "I have been pondering, you see, the prophecy."

"The prophecy!" Frostheart pretended to laugh. "The mere string of words which you wasted, hm, a couple of weeks, maybe a couple of moons, moping in your den for? It needs more pondering than the time you have already so graciously, ah, wasted?"

Stonestar shook his head firmly, smiling as serenely as ever, as if he had not heard all she was saying, because frankly, she was quite sure what she was doing was either insulting his intelligence or insulting his decisions. Nevertheless, he was still wearing his trademark bright smile, and showed no signs of the easy anger he had been displaying recently. He didn't yell at her, didn't lose his temper, just stared into her eyes, waiting.

Frostheart stood up and shook herself. "I'm afraid this is a complete waste of time. No one is going to hunt the evening meal but me, so I should get moving, should I?" she asked testily. "Not unless you've found someone to help me, but of course you haven't, who is there?"

"You'll find Shimmerpelt quite willing to help. I've assigned her to a tiny patrol with you. Her injuries were very minor," Stonestar meowed quietly but pleasantly, his eyes flicking over hers again. "Alright? You can stop complaining about hunting on your own. Shimmerpelt will be a steady partner for you, just be careful around her. We wouldn't want anything bad to happen."

"She's going to be kitting any day now! What kind of partnership is this? Steady, you said?" Frostheart snarled at him, her teeth bared.

"This is your sister we're concerning! Don't you care about her safety?"

"Of course I do," Stonestar said smoothly. "Honeyleaf has been giving her a special kind of herb that should prevent her kits from coming. She'll be fine."

"'Prevent her kits from coming'? Stonestar, it's very troublesome and tiring to carry kits, and she's going to deliberately hold them in? I find this preposterous! I won't take her with me," Frostheart growled.

But, as it turned out, she didn't have a choice, and she ended up with a rather swollen-bellied partner to join her on her trips to find food. She didn't quite enjoy having a partner at all, but she supposed it was only because Shimmerpelt was carrying kits that made the job so difficult. Shimmerpelt definitely slowed her down, moaning about joint pains and whatsoever, but to be perfectly fair to her, she was slightly overdue without even trying to take that herb. Frostheart found she was miserable on the hunts - not her, but Shimmerpelt. Finally she had the heart to approach the silver queen after she had collapsed, wheezing, onto a rock, her huge belly twice the size of any near due Queens Frostheart had ever seen.

"Look, who is forcing you to do this?" Frostheart asked exasperatedly. "Shimmerpelt, you aren't helping me, okay? You're slowing me down, please go back to camp."

Shimmerpelt looked up, sighed, and left.

Finally, she's gone! Frostheart shook herself, suppressing a little guilt at her glee for Shimmerpelt's leaving, and went on with the hunting. Hunting improved, but she was met with more than news when she got back to camp. Apparently, after all Stonestar had assured her, he had been lying about those herbs. Well, she should have seen it coming, she'd never heard of herbs like those before. Anyway, Shimmerpelt had kitted the moment she got back, and she'd named one of the little kittens Heartkit - after Frostheart, maybe? Frostheart knew she shouldn't get hopeful - Heartkit had a heart shaped splash on her chest, it had to be that. Why would Shimmerpelt and Duskcloud name a kit after her, anyway? The

unlikelihood of it all...

Another good thing was that some warriors were about halfway recovered, and though not in perfect health, they were well enough to do hunting at last, meaning she was going to get the good rest she'd been lacking for the past few days. Really, she couldn't have been happier. Then, Stonestar announced the so-called happiest occasion of the week, which turned out to be a Warriors' ceremony for Frostheart's brothers. No surprises there, it was about time, actually, and she was teasing Cloudpaw about it when Windpaw butted in.

"Hello, if you're done, my brother and I need to be going for the actual important business, the real ceremony, unless you think this licking and teasing counts as a warriors ceremony," Windpaw meowed stiffly, and he positively dragged Cloudpaw away. Cloudpaw didn't look even the slightest bit happy. In fact, he kept making faces and shot this very forlorn look at Frostheart, who almost felt sorry for him. They had been talking more often, although Cloudpaw rarely did more than nod stiffly in acceptance, but they had been meeting quietly, no less, just as siblings, naturally. Between meeting two white toms (the other being Skyfeather) and hunting, that pretty much filled her day from dawn to dusk!

Her two brothers were named Windecho and Cloudbeam. Frostheart had to admit, they weren't bad names, even though Stonestar was about as good as carrion at everything else, so she cheered Windecho and Cloudbeam along with everyone else, relishing their cool names on her tongue. Why hadn't she goten a unique name, too? Her ending was heart, one of those most common names in history, undoubtedly one of the most BORING. All of your typical heroes were ending with heart, now and forever onwards! Somebody needed some creativity, and that somebody might just be Stonestar!

"Jealous?" Windecho flicked his tail. UGH, not Windecho, but naturally he would have to rub it in, he was that kind of guy, meanwhile he let her suffer with the boring name.

Meanwhile, she was having some seriously thoughtful conversations

with Skyfeather, which were getting dreadfully annoying, but they were important. He wasn't pushy, but they were getting around the stages where he wanted them to openly be mates. She had yet to tell him about Honeyleaf's wish for her to become a medicine cat. She could imagine that might shatter him, because she knew he thought he was her whole world at that point. But she had to do it soon, no one was going to tell him for her and she didn't want to suddenly ditch him. Because she'd almost made up her mind, to do as Honeyleaf and Hawkfeather suggested and become their able-bodied helper like they wanted. No more fighting, but perhaps that should be a quiet relief. A nice, quiet life, and she could still save everyone as a medicine cat, couldn't she? It would all work out.

"The GATHERING! AND YOU KNOW WHO'S GOING THIS TIME ROUND?" Stonestar boomed so loudly that Frostheart had her tail covering her ears! Why did he have to yell? It was like his 24/7 job was yelling at people! Was he not the Clan leader? "Okay, cats, these are the fellas who are going: myself, naturally, and my bodyguard, Frostheart; her brothers, Windecho and Cloudbeam; Duskcloud and Twilightmoon; Honeyleaf and Hawkfeather, I daresay the wounded cats can look after themselves for a few hours, you do need to share news, don't you, so there." Stonestar looked rather pleased with himself for organizing the gathering cats so neatly, and he obviously couldn't hear Twilightmoon whispering how half the cats he'd picked were still sick or limping or had some problem or another.

"Well, were off! Bye!"

Word count: 2071

Thanks for being patient! Sorry about this not being in bold, I typed this chapter entirely out on my Ipad and it doesn't quite seem to work that way... Okay, bye!

# Chapter Thirteen

So, due to unlucky chances, Frostheart was going to the gathering with her nincompoop leader proclaiming her to be his bodyguard, when of course she was doing no such thing, and was merely falling further and further behind the group, keeping them within sight but not really following much. Should she really be acting as a bodyguard, she was being a horrible one at that, not to mention Stonestar hardly seemed to care that his bodyguard was being woefully absent from everything. Stonestar was even chatting animatedly with Duskcloud, the cat whom he'd forced to go to the gathering even though his mate, Shimmerpelt, had just kitted. Heartkit, Leafkit and Mynakit were absolute cuties, although Mynakit, poor thing, was the only tom among his two sisters Heartkit and Leafkit.

They arrived at the gathering place with their unusually tiny group, and they did attract quite some attention for their strangely small size - AutumnClan was having a laugh at how it was peculiarly small, while most of their group was made up of some wiry rogue or another, many of which could used a good wash, they reeked of Twolegplace. When Twolegplace was concerned, Frostheart had to wonder how many of them were kittypets in disguise, pretending to be fiersome rogues in order to get into the Clan at all. She guessed they had no idea what a grave mistake they were making.

"Nothing much has happened in my Clan," Springstar, who was going first, announced, her silky voice clear and smooth. She sounded perfectly calm and not stressed at all, whereas Mousestar was hopping slightly from one paw to another, like he had anxiety issues. "But perhaps Mousestar would like to speak? I can see he is most eager, and I daresay I wouldn't want to hold you up," Springstar meowed in her usual polite way. "Just a moment, though, I also wanted to congratulate one of my warriors, Streamlight, for helping out SummerClan to gather herbs and hunt a few weeks ago. Wouldn't you say so, Stonestar?" she added even more politely, tilting her head in confusion at him when he didn't

say so.

"Oh, yes, that was very kind of her indeed," Stonestar was flushing, but he didn't dare disagree, and he was looking, on the contrary, quite annoyed, as if Streamlight helping his Clan had annoyed him instead of, well, helping him. "Most kind and polite, she was only dropping by on the border. But, ah, SummerClan can handle their own problems, thank you," he finished, impatience mingling with the attempted politeness he had tried to put in. "We have no need for the meddling of other Clans, so we won't be needing her help again. We didn't need it in the first place either."

Springstar looked quite affronted, but all she had to say was, "I wonder if some of your warriors would agree on that, Stonestar, I daresay they were grateful for the herbs and their dinner. But I mustn't keep anyone, so, Mousestar, you were wanting to speak?" She turned her gaze to the AutumnClan leader, her green eyes fixing on him.

"Ah, yes. We have a lot of new warriors. They didn't take up Warrior names, not all of them, no. Former rogues, you see! I lost a lot of my old Clanborn warriors to a battle with SummerClan"

"Clanborn," one of his new warriors hissed scornfully. "Didn't say so much about that mattering when he came wailing to us! Fraud, he is, but I'm not complaining about the new prey supply. Might keep him round for that, but a "Clanborn" cat is still his deputy! Think that's highly unfair... He said what his rules are, must have an apprentice, he said! What's her apprentice, did Turtleleaf ever have an apprentice?" the warrior asked crossly.

Turtleleaf is his new deputy? Frostheart wondered with a shock. She knew Turtleleaf was one of the few survivors, but those warriors were right, Turtleleaf probably hadn't had an apprentice! Up there Mousestar was yammering away, and Frostheart really did see Turtleleaf sitting with the deputies on the tree roots. She was talking in low tones with Amberfrost, who was looking rather disgruntled, and was constantly shushing Turtleleaf. Stonestar hadn't named Amberfrost as one of the cats to come, but she had followed him anyway and he had given no objection. She had a lot more power than he'd like to admit.

"Right, so, we had a send-off a few weeks ago for almost all our warriors, and I have a new deputy, Turtleleaf, one of the few survivors," Mousestar presented her proudly, and she promptly stopped talking to Amberfrost, moving forward to puff her chest out. "Less warriors around than I'd like, but there's a reason we recruited all those rogues! Turtleleaf's idea, of course, my new deputy has startlingly good ideas," he added more to himself, as if his new purpose in life was to be praising Turtleleaf nonstop. "Yes, great ideas indeed, but I'm done, so maybe Snowstar would like to speak."

"Yes please, Mousestar," Snowstar meowed quickly, and Frostheart noted the sour expression on Stonestar's face. They were making him go last, like he an his Clan were unimportant. Compared to Mousestar, Snowstar's news was quite boring. In Snowstar's Clan there had been a fox, which brought Frostheart to remember her late parents, and then quite a few new little paws pattering around the nursery. "That's all for me, what say you, Stonestar?"

"I want someone to explain why I'm going last!" Stonestar exploded, his anger bursting out in huge waves.

Springstar and Snowstar looked confused by how easily aggravated he was. "But I'd have thought that was obvious, Stonestar!" Springstar meowed, sounding thoroughly amused by his sudden outburst. "We were going in a circle, and you happened to be on my left." She nodded to her right, which was where Mousestar stood.

"You know your directions, don't you?" Mousestar asked Stonestar rather aggressively.

"Of course I know my directions," Stonestar responded coldly. "If you don't mind, I'll speak now, without interruptions, as I don't permit those."

"'Don't permit those'," Mousestar snorted. "Do you think we care, old man? But of course you do... You always do, don't you... Ah! I forgot something, bless me! Great StarClan, how I forgot this, it's of gravest importance!"

"Speak, then," Snowstar meowed, amused.

"I will speak! Of course! How not to! There is a murderer in Stonestar's Clan! Frostheart! It's her! Terrible, isn't it! But the truth! Argh! Hit me hard in the face! You know, she almost killed Turtleleaf!" Mousestar jabbered away.

Frostheart raised her eyebrows and answered coolly, "You'll find I spared her life, actually, and a jolly lot of good that did me, she tried to kill me immediately afterwards."

"Aha! See! No regrets!" Mousestar snarled.

"No regrets? What should I regret, not dying?" Frostheart replied coolly. "Perhaps I should regret not dying to her claws, perhaps indeed, because my life is so terrible, is it not?"

"Frostheart, HOLD YOUR TONGUE! And Mousestar, I will not permit you to speak that way to my bodyguard!" Stonestar snarled.

"Your bodyguard?" Mousestar looked coldly surprised. "I was not aware we had bodyguards - frankly, I haven't heard that term in... A long time, I daresay. It was a joke as kits! You have a real one, then, and of all cats, you picked Frostheart, did you? Well, she's a better cat than you at least... Did you know he cowered in his den while my warriors destroyed his Clan?" His eyes grew eager as he saw Springstar and Snowstar's eyes widen.

"Did he really? Stonestar never struck me as a coward," Springstar meowed, fixing Stonestar with a hard stare.

"Coward? Definitely not! And now, am I sharing my news or aren't I?" Stonestar's eyes glowed dangerously, and even Mousestar seemed to know his time was up, now was time to give way and let Stonestar talk. He didn't look remotely pleased about it, and kept talking downwards to his deputy, Turtleleaf, who couldn't have been looking happier, feeling all important as she was. "We have two new warriors, Windecho and Cloudbeam, of course, had to give them stunning names, catches the eye, don't they? Thought they sounded lovely, Windecho is a personal favorite, only my third creation, you know, I have to say I'm a natural at this naming thing, but I definitely wouldn't say no to a redo of Frostheart's, oh, Springstar, do you know if that's allowed?"

"To redo a warrior's name? Well, I daresay nothing's happened to her yet, so there's really no point. You want to give her a cool name, but a name is a name, Stonestar, what in StarClan are you planning on naming her anyway?" Springstar asked, shaking her head disapprovingly. She evidently thought that if Stonestar had named Frostheart properly, he wouldn't be having second thoughts, although Frostheart seriously didn't mind getting her name changed. But she probably would be anyway, if she did change to become a medicine cat, it would be natural.

"Frostsnarl, I was thinking, but it's a little scary, Frostsnarl, wouldn't you say so, Frostheart?" Stonestar asked in a lighthearted tone, but his eyes were piqued with curiosity as he looked down at Frostheart. "You're being rather quiet, aren't you? Speak up, I need to know, do you want to be renamed?"

"My current name's perfectly fine, thank you, shouldn't you have thought about this earlier?" Frostheart asked testily, looking away from him; he must be the most careless cat in history if he was only really considering names now, although she'd always had an inkling that she'd been given a random name to satisfy her just enough to get past the first moon or so, which was about how long it had lasted before she'd started wishing for another name, and now that she'd finally been presented with one, Frostsnarl had to be the worst possible new name in history.

"Earlier! Better late than early, I say!" Stonestar bared his teeth as if as a joke and glanced nervously at Mousestar, who seemed to be chewing his lip in a rather strange manner. "You alright, Mousy?" he asked in a light tone, but he was really going for the insults, the one that day being Mousy.

"Mousy? You- names, how dare you! Are you dropping to insults? You are weak! And what will I call you, then? Stoney? Starry? Oh, I've got one!" Mousestar jumped up and down with merry excitement, hardly containable. "Yes, I'll call you Stoney Stars!" For all the jumping and laughing gleefully, Frostheart had expected a better, funnier nickname than Stoney Stars. But Mousestar seemed delighted by it, so there wasn't much she could do. Stoney Stars... really made her want to laugh, that stupid corny name, it was just a play on words really. Mousestar's sense of humor was horrible, but

she couldn't say so because he was a Clan leader and SummerClan was already in a terrible situation.

"Stoney Stars?" said Stonestar, and he honestly sounded mildly interested in the name. "You know, Mousy, it isn't a bad one, what should I call you next, Mousey Stars?" he asked thoughtfully, and Mousestar didn't look as surly as usual either, was he enjoying this?

And Mousestar said, "Sure, Mousey Stars sounds great, makes us sound like buddies, doesn't it?"

Whatever it was, it set Stonestar off, and while Mousestar was busy cackling maliciously, Stonestar leapt for him, unsheathing claws. "SUMMERCLAN, ATTACK!" he yowled furiously, slashing madly at Mousestar's throat. "ATTACK, YOU FAT BUNCH OF BADGERS, DON'T STAND AROUND THERE! AMBERFROST, RALLY THEM TO ATTACK!" He was screaming while fighting, an admirable feat for someone who usually moped around his den all day, and the cats of SummerClan were looking at each other, hiding their looks of confusion at his sudden attack.

Springstar was sighing exasperatedly. "What is the point of this truce when all that it does is get broken?" she huffed in annoyance, and, with a quiet giggle, Frostheart had to nod in agreement. She couldn't have been more right. The truce had been broken almost every gathering for a while now, with some attack from some cat going on one after another.

"The point? Ah, to be broken?" Snowstar asked thoughtfully, and the two female leaders were giggling away on the Tree while the two male leaders brawled. Their Clans weren't exactly having it easy, either. WinterClan and SpringClan watched with round eyes as SummerClan fought AutumnClan. The best insults going round were SummerClan's warriors calling AutumnClan's 'rogue-born' which was actually a pretty dumb insult because it was the truth, the idea being that only dumb insults were going round.

Frostheart ended up fighting a spiny gray tabby who looked wily but was actually slow, barely flesh and bone as it could be considered, and he had large bloodshot eyes which were as orange as sunset and displayed great anger.

"You know, I've got no food where I come from?" he growled furiously when Frostheart met him in attack.

Frostheart blinked in confusion. Of all the things she'd expected the rogues to say, it had more to do with battle cries and less to do with real life stuff. "Naturally, why else would you come here and help him? He's a monster," Frostheart meowed firmly.

"Not as bad as your leader, is he? Your leader's unstable, did he eat catnip or somethin'?" the gray tabby jeered.

"Cat... what? Did you say catmint?" Frostheart asked. "Because no, he hasn't eaten catmint, we haven't any left, not with all these... oh, never mind, rogues wouldn't understand."

That, apparently, was the wrong thing to say. "HOW DARE YOU! YOU KNOW THEM INSULTS AND YOU'RE USING THEM ON US! I KNEW CLAN CATS COULDN'T BE TRUSTED! THEY TAKE OUR WORDS AND TWIST THEM ONTO US, WHEN DID I SAY CATMINT, HUH, IT WAS DEFINITELY CATNIP, AND HOW DARE YOU CALL ME A ROGUE, I'M A CLAN CAT! I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A CLAN CAT MY WHOLE LIFE AND NOW YOU COME INSULTIN' ME!" He heaved in deep breaths, looking hysterical. "BUT NOW YOU'RE GONNA PAY FOR IT, HOW DARE YOU INSULT ME, I'M MORE CLANLY THAN YOU ARE, I'VE NEVER KILLED IN ME LIFE, AND YOU KILLED SIXTEEN OR MORE I HEARD, WHAT OF YOUR STUPID WARRIOR CODE, EH, WHAT OF IT TELLING NOT TO KILL UNNECESSARILY?"

"There," Frostheart meowed simply. "That's how I know you were a rogue. Only rogue-joiners study the code like it's law, because they have to stick so closely by it that nobody remembers they were rogues! That's you, isn't it, you talk about me paying but it's you the former rogue. 'Us Clan cats', you call us, so of course you're not one of us. You're with them rogues, aren't you?" she hissed into the gray tabby's ear.

He slumped before her, really was a loose bag of bones, and he looked haggard, she almost regretted letting him drop. "I was dyin', kid, where was I suppos'd to go? Not like there's anywhere that'll take me, I'm to crim'nal, innit?"

"I don't understand you and I don't want to. Goodbye," Frostheart meowed, unsheathing claws.

"Goodbye, you say! More like badbye, innit, the way you're plannin' on sendin' me off, won't be kind, thank you very much, I'd rather not die by them claws..." the gray tabby was talking to himself more than her now, and Frostheart was finding killing him a rather disturbing experience. "Spare me, won'ya, I won' cause trouble for ya any more... just spare me, please.... spare..."

"Fine." Frostheart couldn't have been more disgusted. "You're spared, go tell tall tales of my mercy or whatnot, I don't care. Just go, run, I don't want to kill any more than I have to."

"So ya do follow da warrior code!" the gray tabby said triumphantly.

"Only slightly, really gets in the way, doesn't it?" Frostheart asked coldly.

"Meet me here. Two nights from now, won' yeh..." the gray tabby said.

"No," meowed Frostheart coldly.

"No?" the gray tabby looked surprised, affronted even. "O... O' course, I know why, it's cos I haven' told yeh my name, innit... it's Greyhound, like da sound of it, don't yeh, quite nice, gotta... spin on it, if yeh say it fast - *Greyhound*. Nice, innit?"

"I suppose. The answer is no. I couldn't care less what happened to you," Frostheart meowed and left.

She could have sworn she heard him say, "Spread tall tales in her wake? Why'd anyone wanna know what had happened to her either?"

**Word count: 2713**

**So after that extraordinary wait for the last chapter, this one came fast, yeah. I need to apologize cos I noticed something.**

**Every time I say something like "I'm so PUMPED to write this book!" I update rapid fast once, and then I... don't update for a while.**

**I'm SUPER SORRY. I am pumped, but I've been sick since TUESDAY - the WHOLE WEEK - and I was sleeping a lot, so not really feeling up to writing.**

**I'm really sorry. I've also been missing a very fun project, my collaboration wings of fire fanfiction with my best friend on Wattpad, we haven't been working on it much at all so I've been coming on Wattpad less and less. I'm so sorry, if this gets worse, I may take a break from Wattpad.**

**~ Frostwind88**

# Chapter Fourteen

Frostheart didn't see much of the gray tabby after that, thank StarClan, she was rather sick of him after meeting him once, by what really bothered her was that he had asked to see her again in two nights, and she was wondering whether she should report him. She hardly knew him so it seemed unfair, but she also had other duties to attend to, like the sad job of finally telling Skyfeather that she was going to become a medicine cat and that their relationship was over. She had no idea what he would say - would he be disappointed or sad, or maybe he would be indifferent? It was hard to tell with Skyfeather, who could be extremely expressive at times and expressionless at others. Sometimes he faced her with such a flat face that she had to refrain from asking, 'What's the matter with you?'

"It's over," she said simply. "I've made up my mind, I am doing it, I'm going to be a medicine cat. The experience should help me learn, perhaps it would even do me some good. I'm really sorry," she added quickly, "when Honeyleaf first asked, we weren't so... You know, together, and it seemed easy enough, but like now, I really consider it and... Yes, that's my answer to her, but that means my answer to you is no. I'm really sorry!" She burst out, and she meant every word she said, the sincerity was obvious in her face. And he met her eyes, black expression unreadable, but he didn't say anything angry, he just nodded, a little coldly in fact.

"I understand. It was never going to work out," he said softly, turning away. "I understand you have more important things than me, I only thought you did care. Oh, I know you do," he added when Frostheart opened her mouth to protest, "I just thought you cared more, that's all, but it's really alright, I'm not fussed, really." He got up and left, and Frostheart had nothing to say to him, her tail drooping.

She headed for the medicine den, her head hanging low even though she should be happy. She'd never thought she'd gotten

attached to Skyfeather, but maybe she had, because she was feeling sadness then, and the look of torment on his face was horrible to her. He looked genuinely sad, and yet she had nothing to say. It was all her fault. Perhaps she shouldn't have become a medicine cat, after all this.

"You are ready?" Honeyleaf asked smoothly, quiet voice confident.

"Of course I am," Frostheart meowed miserably. "I always have been, I just quickly ended things with Skyfeather, now I'm readier."

"Good, good," Honeyleaf meowed earnestly. "That's spectacular, I didn't know you had it in you. Now, your first patient is your very own brother. Yes, brother, as you are to be my apprentice, I will not hear that nonsense from you," Honeyleaf glowered at her, and showed her towards Windecho.

"I'm being treated by her? Is this some kind of joke? I only stepped on a thorn, now I need to be killed?" Windecho asked coldly, looking up, but there was fear in his eyes.

Frostheart eyed him pitifully. But she didn't get to say anything because Honeyleaf opened her mouth delicately to speak at that precise moment, and it was decidedly rude to interrupt the occasion.

"Actually, you'll find such a wound is a simple but extraordinary thing," Honeyleaf supplied. "You need to pull out the thorn precisely the right way, if not it hurts, of course, and we wouldn't want that, would we, Windecho? Today your sister is my little helper, she will be assisting me with this task, removing your thorn, and you will cooperate, am I clearly understood?" She towered over Windecho in a menacing way, so menacing that he quickly nodded, despite being known for never backing down during arguments. Frostheart gave Honeyleaf a sort of appraising look. There was more to that old she-cat than met the eye.

"Very well, she can get rid of my thorn," Windecho meowed sulkily, "but mind you, if anything goes wrong, my backup is you, not her, understood?"

"Are you the boss of me?" Honeyleaf asked testily. "I will not give you a definite yes because it depends on the situation and how far out of hand it has gotten. Rest assured your sister will not be killing you tonight - but perhaps she might in due succession, you aren't the kindest, are you?"

Windecho gawked at her but said nothing. Frostheart knew what he did want to say. He wanted to tell Honeyleaf off for constantly calling Frostheart his sister when they were unrelated, and he wanted her to remove his thorn herself. But none of them could so much look Honeyleaf in the eye without looking away fearfully, so it was a losing battle he was fighting. Windecho sighed in annoyance and regret, like he'd rather have done it all himself, but there was nothing he could do and frankly, nothing he could possibly want to do. He held out his paw loftily but brought it back with a wince, and Frostheart could see the thorn clearly. Yellow ooze and thick blood was crusted around the wound, which looked old and not too recent.

"When was this?" Honeyleaf clucked disapprovingly at the sight. "You should have come for treatment immediately, it will be much more painful now, how long have you been walking around with this embedded into your paw? Haven't you been feeling the stinging pain there, or are you as ignorant as you look?"

"Do you insult everybody, old cat? Of course I knew the wound was there, I merely couldn't be bothered and it wasn't paining me too much until this morning, I suppose it might be infected," Windecho said in the same lofty voice.

"Might be! It damned well is! And you should have come to me earlier! StarClan, what do I do with you?" Honeyleaf hissed, annoyed, almost to herself as she stormed around. "Hurry up and pull it out, Frostheart, we haven't got all day and he's shaking like a mouse, he evidently can't hold up that paw much longer and the pained expression is such a bore."

Frostheart felt she couldn't have met a more unsympathetic medicine cat and mentor. Didn't they have some kind of patience and kindness test before one could become a fully fledged medicine cat? Honeyleaf was certainly nailing that now, Frostheart had to

hide sarcasm with every response she gave the old medicine cat, each of which had to be just flattering, allowing Honeyleaf to think she had any kind of hold over Frostheart and was an influencial figure when of course she was not.

Frostheart yanked the thorn out of Windecho's paw and he yowled in pain and fright. It had been out of the blue, but he should've been bracing himself all along, how long had she spent staring at him, both of their hearts pounding against their ribcages? He had had time from infinity!

"Very nice, now, don't sweeten it at all, absolutely do not coo to him as if he's a baby," Honeyleaf meowed passionately.

Frostheart stared at her, revolted. "I wasn't planning to!" she said, gawking slightly.

"I didn't expect you to, dear, I would have been horrified if you had," Honeyleaf responded easily. "But you know some of them try, they think it makes the patient feel better, really it doesn't, but both Blossomleaf and Morninglight tried it."

Blossomleaf and Morninglight... Probably names she would need to remember, so Frostheart screwed up her eyes in concentration to remember. Windecho was sighing with boredom now, his wound still causing the occasional yelp.

"I've had quite enough of wasting time, are any of you going to dress this wound, because otherwise I should get going!" Windecho exploded.

"Wasting time? Dressing your paw, I assume, is that dressing, because I do not permit myself to be addressed in this manner!" Honeyleaf tutted. "You shall, of course, only be treated if your sister is willing."

"If I'm willing?" A silly grin spread across Frostheart's face, but seeing the grim expression on Honeyleaf's face, Frostheart could tell that the old medicine cat was waiting for much, much more than for Frostheart to turn her brother away. She wanted to see something, and Frostheart was going to have to give it to her.

"You've a lucky day, Windecho, because I'm in an oddly good mood today so yes, I will help you," Frostheart meowed, imitating the same lofty voice as him, batting her eyelashes a little too much.

"It's not what you'll permit, it's what I will! I have half a mind to leave right now, I'm not your guinea pig!" Windecho exploded, his temper not having retracted in the slightest.

"Half a mind to leave? Then leave, dear fellow, do you think I want anything to do with you?" Frostheart asked, revolted. "Do you know you disgust many of us, myself included, for that matter? You think you're smart and popular, with your stupid head of course flying high over reality."

Windecho didn't take kindly to insults, but he wasn't usually insulted when there were actually people around, so he just breathed in rapidly, blinking which made him look like he was batting his eyelashes bashfully, even though he didn't really have eyelashes at all. He certainly wouldn't like her to describe him as a rotund kitty on verge of explosion, which was how Frostheart would describe him if she was forced to do so in a kindly manner.

"Get on with the dressings, I haven't got all day," he finally consented to mutter, leaving Frostheart in a small bout of giggles as she attempted to find the right herbs.

"Get that one, chamomile, too. It's a travelling herb that Stonestar will need for later," Honeyleaf meowed randomly. She was standing right next to the chamomile and could easily have gotten it herself! Still, with Windecho's eyes on her, Frostheart really dared not do anything wrong, so she nodded and attempted a tiny curtsey before drawing away.

"'Chamomile'," Windecho said disdainfully. "You know, they really have funny names, these herbs."

"Very funny," Honeyleaf snarled. "You'll want to remember, Frostheart, that chamomile is for strength, and apparently this kindly fellow thinks he doesn't need it next time," she added in a friendly sort of way, though her words were anything but friendly. "Really nice of you to say that, no one has insulted my herbs in

ages, I've been needing target practice for a real day... Yes, but of course chamomile is completely necessary, the name isn't funny at all. Now do the dressing, mash some of that into a poultice. You know, it might not hurt to give him chamomile as well, but it's only a thorn in his paw, I'd say he's quite alright. Mash up some marigold, horsetail, and a bit of poppy leaves, they don't have the same effect as their seeds but it numbs the wound a little, remember that, then you stick it on with cobwebs, you'll need a huge dollop of that, by the way. Don't be concerned about the amount you're using, I want to see him with a cocoon of a paw when you're done."

"Really funny," said Windecho flatly, but he was shivering a little. "You wouldn't, would you?" he asked testily.

Frostheart shrugged, not wanting to assure him of anything. She had yet to decide whether she would treat him at all, but her paws seemed to be making the poultice of of their own accord, so it looked like she was treating him after all. She couldn't exactly disobey her paws, could she? But her mind drifted as she did her work, drifting to the long hours spent with Skyfeather. She had just dropped him like that, sudden as you please, right when he'd wanted them to be publicly mates. Was that a little awful, untactful and not subtle at all of her? It was like he wasn't good enough for her, she'd just ditched him suddenly, and now she was feeling the remorse for it. She could have at least said something a little more comforting, say it wasn't his fault or anything, he probably felt terrible, thinking she hated him so much she had to run away to become a medicine cat! She really was untactful, wasn't she? Still, there wasn't anything she could do to reverse it and Skyfeather was probably long gone. StarClan only knew whether he was already scampering after another gorgeous she-cat, the first that caught his eye.

"You're good, move on," Frostheart meowed, giving Windecho a slight nudge away.

Windecho jumped, letting out a small hiss. "Don't touch me with your stupidly dirty paws, don't you dare utter and besmirch my name, don't you dare have anything to do with me! I overheard what you said to Skyfeather, but I bet he's inwardly rejoicing!

You're awful, but he's a nice cat, probably didn't want to say he hated you to your face! And all that's okay, isn't it, but you played with his heart, he really liked you, stupid of him, really, but he never had much of brains, did he?"

"You dare?" Frostheart leapt to her paws and pinned Windecho to the ground. "I can undo this poultice as quickly as I did it, and you won't be quite so good looking with a gaping hole in your paw, will you?"

"You wouldn't," Windecho breathed, but there was panic shining in his eyes, and he was sweating profusely. "You wouldn't dare! I am who I am! It's not my fault you stupid snivelling brat of a sister that you can't appreciate me!"

"Appreciate YOU?" Frostheart demanded with a cackle. "I couldn't appreciate you if you were the nicest cat to everyone in the forest, do you know how awful you are, even to Cloudbeam? He said so himself, said you treat him like dirt, like his feelings don't matter, and you know why he started talking to me, don't you? Because he hasn't got any friends and you're not worth anything, you worthless piece of dung!"

"HA! You see! You see! It's all you! You're the one who hates me, what did I ever do to you?" Windecho demanded shrilly.

"Frostmouse," Frostheart whispered, her voice barely audible, her lips barely moving, just enough to form the word. "I never forget, Windecho. Never." She looked him hard in the eye, felt him shake beneath her unsheathed claws. He feared her, he was scared, his heart was palpitating wildly and he was terrified.

"Frostmouse... Chill out, Frostheart, have you been hating me all along for that?" Windecho asked, looking genuinely shocked. "Frostheart, that was eons ago, it was a joke! We were kits, okay? Let me go!"

"But you're not sorry, because if you were, you would have said so, done something in apology!" Frostheart slammed his face hard into the earth so that he let out an involuntary cry of pain. "No, you aren't sorry, you don't regret a single thing because it was funny,

wasn't it, to see my face and have Stormwind be the only one ever standing up for me? Stormwind, who isn't even my real sister, but we were closer than close? And guess what, stupid thing, she's dead, and my real siblings are still ignoring me! Who do you take me for, a mouse? I that why you gave me that stupid name?" Frostheart demanded, her voice as shrill as his, sharp and accusing, and the best part was he couldn't even defend himself, he knew it was true, he was just glued to the spot, his eyes wavering, not daring to meet her eyes. "It's alright, I got on perfectly fine, no thanks to you! Now get out of here!" She jumped off him, winding him as she jumped, and he gave a huge cough, wheezing for air, before scrambling out of the den.

Word count: 2632

# Chapter Fifteen

Over the next few days, Frostheart saw a little of Skyfeather here and there, but they never exchanged anything more than a nod, and he seemed to be passing the message that whatever had been between them had never happened, and she should act like it. Frostheart could scarcely hide her sadness at this note, as she had imagined them still remaining friends despite everything, still having friendly interactions, still talking and sharing prey at the least. She had certainly not expected to be completely thrown out of his life, as if she had never existed and they had never been close. But she was quiet about it, quietly accepting, not mentioning it to him or anyone, although she hardly talked to anyone nowadays. Cloudbeam and the two medicine cats were rare exceptions, but Cloudbeam seemed to be treating Frostheart like an emotional support animal, telling her everything that went on during his day and boring her half to death. Frostheart had a right mind to stop talking to Cloudbeam entirely, but he was her brother, even though he was so annoying, and he was one of her only friends, so she put up with his addled brains and tried her best to have intelligent conversation with him whenever possible.

But finally, it seemed like their eventual meeting to discuss whatever could no longer be put off, and the next time Frostheart bumped into Skyfeather, he cleared his throat loudly while staring at the ground.

"Oh, that's nice, Mr. Perfect has time for me now? Suddenly?" Frostheart asked sweetly, smiling with her teeth. "Oh, how lovely."

Skyfeather glared at her, his expression unforgiving. "You are the one who dumped me, will you admit that? I just came here to ask you why, okay? I know it sounds stupid, but I am so horribly emotionally attached to you and I feel like I really need you back, but of course you can't because you're a medicine cat now and I'm stupid to even ask but please, why? Why did you leave me, make that choice? Am I that awful? Really?"

"You're not awful at all!" Frostheart was stunned. "I am super sorry! Honeyleaf said being a medicine cat was my destiny, but destiny can go sleep in fox dung, I don't really care! But she went all mystical, like, WOOH, THIS IS DESTINY, BABY, and I was kinda creeped, so I just agreed! Okay?" Frostheart drew in a sharp breath.

"Okay," Skyfeather blinked. "So, you are not angry at me and I didn't do anything wrong?"

"Of course not!" sighed Frostheart exasperatedly. As if anyone could stay mad at Skyfeather! But he really looked so desperate that she had to laugh, he had been moping all this while thinking she hated him and was upset, when really, he could have just asked her any time he wanted! He bumped into her around camp so often, Frostheart could swear half the time, it was completely intentional, and he kept shooting her shy looks during the day like some dirty flirter, but of course she knew he wasn't a flirter, he was too nice for that. "Mad at you? Just another impossibility, isn't it? Pass me the list next time, won't you?"

Skyfeather managed a small smile. "But I understand it all now, I'm perfectly okay! Thanks for clearing up the misunderstandings, also what do you think of Twilightmoon?"

"Perfect and boring, if you're romantically interested, you mean," Frostheart replied dryly. "My brother's also romantically interested, Cloudbeam, you know, so you have competition." She made her voice as dry as possible. Why was he asking her for advice on other she-cats? Wasn't that just awful? Taking advantage of her good nature! Ugh! She really couldn't understand him sometimes.

"Oh, um," Skyfeather licked his chest. "No, I didn't mean her for myself. You, of course, are the only she-cat there's ever been for me. I meant for my brother, Blackfoot, he seems to like her a lot, you know, brotherly interests, I'm a little concerned for him, he's gone a bit... Er... Crazy lately. He's obsessed with Twilightmoon, and if she isn't interested in him he might just think it's the end of the world." Skyfeather rolled his eyes. "A little overdramatic, I know, but Blackfoot is really an actor, and Twilightmoon is fairly pretty for an unmated she-cat, and completely unrelated to us, so perfect." He blinked rapidly, then bid Frostheart a quick goodbye and scurried

off.

*Weird!* Frostheart thought as he scurried away, probably to have a heart-to-heart talk with his brother. Skyfeather was kind of strange, but she kind of liked him for being strange. Was she weird, too? Yeah, she probably was.

"FROSTHEART! CAN I SEE YOU IN MY DEN?" roared Stonestar from his den.

*That's really polite!* Frostheart thought, frowning. She considered saying no, but she wasn't on the worst terms with him yet, so perhaps she ought to just follow him into his den - FOR NOW. Later on, if she wanted to rebel against him, she SO would. She quickly scampered into his den, raising one eyebrow in a skeptical manner.

"Well, what's the big deal today?" she asked. It wasn't like he ever called her to his den for anything serious! (Okay, the only other time she'd been in his den, he was practically getting killed. But nothing serious!)

"WHADDAYA MEAN"

"Could you stop shouting?" Frostheart asked in her sweetest tone, trying to sound polite, because she never was. But he wasn't exactly being polite either, and she fixed him with narrowed eyes, annoyed.

Stonestar took in deep breaths, which sounded ragged. What had he been doing with his life? "What do you mean, what's the big deal? You're literally my bodyguard! I want to be tailed from dawn till dusk! But you aren't doing your job!"

"OH, that," said Frostheart, rolling her eyes. "Well, new factor, I just became a medicine cat apprentice a few days ago. So, I literally can't be your bodyguard anymore. I'll be focused on healing cats, you know, dealing with herbs and all that. Being the leader's bodyguard is on my to-don't list."

Stonestar glared down at her, and Frostheart could see his temper was rising, but she wasn't scared of him. Who would? He looked like an incredibly overgrown kit, as fluffy as one, with the poofy fur

and drooping tail of one that had just been caught doing something naughty. That was a good name for him. Overgrown Kit. Better than Stoney Stars any day.

"Are you," he said carefully, "renouncing your title?"

Frostheart shrugged. "Yeah, sure, why not? What's the biggie if I renounce it?"

Stonestar drew in a sharp breath, again sounding ragged. "But that's bad for you. I was going to take you as my mate! Clan leader's mate! Wouldn't that have been lovely? But now your title is renounced, and I won't."

Frostheart, on the other hand, looked revolted. "Who's wanna mate with you?" she demanded. "You look like an overgrown kit!"

Stonestar's eyes bulged out of his head. "WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?!"

"An overgrown kit, why?" Frostheart asked casually.

"GET OUT OF MY DEN!" Stonestar roared.

Her ears ringing, she complied, gracefully tiptoeing out of the leader's den and smiling sweetly back at him. She almost immediately bumped into Skyfeather. So much for him being angry at her. She bumped into him around camp about as many times as a she-cat would bump into her mate.

"Hello?" she asked uncertainly.

But he was just worried. "Are you okay? He was yelling at you."

Frostheart shrugged. "And when," she said, turning to leave, "have I cared when Stonestar yelled at me?"

"WAIT - WAIT!" he called.

Frostheart gave a soft groan and turned back. "Look, I know we were pretty attached, but it's kind of over now, isn't it?"

"If you... if you ever change back to a warrior," he said breathlessly, "I'm still here, okay?"

Frostheart gave him the softest look she could muster. "You miss me. You big softie."

"What- I mean, of course I do," he babbled. "Why wouldn't I?"

Frostheart giggled softly. "Because I thought you were tough. I thought you would take this like swatting away an irksome fly."

Skyfeather stared back. "You know swatting flies is hard for me, right? I don't exactly have ten meter long hands, I have stubby paws that hurt when you fling them!"

At that comment, Frostheart just couldn't stop giggling, it was her natural reaction. Skyfeather was wearing a very amused expression on his face, like he'd expected this to happen and it was so funny. But yeah, it kind of was. He'd just said something incredibly funny, so he should have expected this to happen - but was she so predictable? He said something and she would definitely laugh? Did that mean she had to sober up? She tried to stop laughing, so it started coming in short snorts and wheezes, but that looked even funnier, and she was getting infuriated with herself. *Take deep breaths. Everyone's looking at you,* she thought. Finally, her laughter subsided.

"Okay, what was that for?" she asked him irritably.

"Nothing!" Skyfeather meowed defensively. "Why would it be for anything?"

"Just remember," she said, in the softest voice she could make, "it's over, don't dwell on it. Why don't you find yourself a nice little girlfriend like your brother, and forget about me."

"What if the nice little girlfriend I want is you?" he asked in a cross whisper.

She swatted his ear. "Well, too bad for you."

Frostheart about ended their conversation there because she took

off for the medicine den as fast as her legs would take her. She left him in the dust, confused but giggling, and almost crashed into her mentors, who were having a quiet, private conversation. Hawkfeather gasped when she entered.

"I forgot she was- this is a bad idea, the one you're suggesting," he told Honeyleaf.

"The one you're suggesting is worse!" Honeyleaf glared back. "WE DO NOT MURDER! WE ARE MEDICINE CATS!"

"Murder? What's going on?" Frostheart demanded, flabbergasted. Her mentors were planning on murdering someone? But how could they manage it?

"Then REMEMBER that you are a medicine cat!" Hawkfeather fired back. "You think we can't see or hear you flirting with Skyfeather?"

Frostheart blushed furiously. "It's not flirting! We were going to be mates when I decided to become a medicine cat, okay? Old emotions are still there!"

"I heard what he said. If you ever change back," Hawkfeather said huffily. "Once you change to be a medicine cat, you CAN'T CHANGE BACK!"

"Well, it's not exactly like I WANTED IT, IS IT?" Frostheart yelled, her voice almost matching his. "YOU TOLD ME IT WAS FREAKING DESTINY, AND I FOLLOWED! NOT MY FAULT, IS IT?"

"WHEN YOU FOLLOW DESTINY, YOU FACE DESTINY, THERE'S NO GOING BACK!"

"WELL, WHAT IF THIS ISN'T MY DESTINY?" Frostheart roared.

"Stop yelling!" Honeyleaf cried desperately from where she hid behind a herb stack. "Listen to reason! I had a vision about you! That's that! You're our little medicine cat!"

"I think you only picked me because you thought that I was killing too much," Frostheart whispered, and she was astonished to find she had tears in her eyes. "Did you look closely at the white cat in

your vision? Were her or his eyes - were they really purple?"

At that, Honeyleaf let out an involuntary gasp. "No, they weren't - they were blue!"

"There you go. I'm the wrong cat. You probably wanted my brother," said Frostheart bitterly. "Now, I think I'll leave. I'm not interested in your stupid herbs."

"What?! No! You have talent! I want to fully train you first!" Honeyleaf cried maniacally. "That way, if we ever die, at least someone in the Clan will have knowledge of herbs!"

"I ALREADY KNOW THE HERBS!" Frostheart roared. "I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ANY MORE, THROW ME OUT, I DON'T CARE!"

Honeyleaf stared at her with no words to be found. Finally, she managed a small whisper, "If that is truly the path you want. But you can't fight destiny."

"It's not my destiny," Frostheart reminded her. "It's the blue-eyed white cat's destiny."

And, with that as the word of farewell, she threw herself from the medicine den, landing on the soft grass outside with a relieved sigh.

**Word count: 2000**

**And I'm finally typing this on my laptop again! So we have bolded words now!**

# Chapter Sixteen

Having only been a medicine cat for several days up to a week, Frostheart was starting to wonder whether she'd acted rashly. Skyfeather was annoyed that she'd become a medicine cat only for a few days and caused him much grief, only to swap back a few days later. He seemed to think she was going out of her way to annoy him, no matter how much she yammered on about Honeyleaf's faked so-called destiny. But she hadn't entirely forgotten what the golden medicine cat had said. Being a medicine cat was the blue-eyed white cat's destiny. Not hers, but, who was the blue-eyed white cat? Her brother might be the only cat in the Clan matching that description. Should she tell him? But he was way too busy either tailing Windecho to follow his every command or mooning over Twilightmoon. Was there anything she could do to warn him before Honeyleaf pounced on him like she'd done with her?

Frostheart didn't have a clue what to do, but she just left it there. She didn't need to warn anybody. Even if it came as a nasty shock, it wasn't super bad (Well, yes, it was, but she didn't want to admit it). Besides, Honeyleaf liked her tone of surprise. If she pounced on Cloudbeam and dramatically told him about destiny, only to find he already knew, she was going to be the most annoyed cat on the planet. Currently, she was sulking outside her den, muttering about how Frostheart had had potential and all that nonsense. Sure, maybe she'd had potential, but being a medicine cat wasn't her calling.

Still, as Amberfrost didn't seem to be aware of the change, she was quite happy to lounge in camp all day. She did go out to hunt occasionally, and join the occasional apprentice training session (well, no, they didn't have any apprentices). When she tried to join an apprentice training session, she suddenly realized how long they'd been going without apprentices and new warriors. She and her brothers might well be the only batch in moons.

She came back only to find an interesting conversation going on in

the medicine den, so of course she had to eavesdrop. Twilightmoon was talking in a rapid, excited tone, words spilling out of her mouth so fast that Frostheart could barely understand her. Finally, all her questions asked, Twilightmoon looked at Honeyleaf with round eyes.

"Yes, you're expecting kits," Honeyleaf agreed shortly, then attempted to return to sorting her herbs, but Twilightmoon just kept on going.

"You're sure?" the silver she-cat asked nervously. Frostheart was sure she was testing Honeyleaf's tolerance. The cranky old medicine cat normally didn't take so many questions at a time.

"Yes I'm sure!" Honeyleaf snapped back. "What do you think you've got, belly expanding and hungry all the time cancer?"

Twilightmoon flushed under Honeyleaf's critical stare. "But, I mean, there's no chance I'll lose them, right?"

"Of course there's a chance. If you keep yelling at me, the chance is higher!" Honeyleaf fired back. "Now will you leave me alone to sort my herbs! And why are you lurking there, Frostheart? I thought you gave up."

"Gave up? No, I decided being a medicine cat wasn't my calling. And I wanted you to know that because you keep moping around muttering about all my wasted potential and whatnot!" Frostheart growled. Technically a lie, but she couldn't exactly go on about how 'the conversation had sounded interesting' and 'she'd decided to eavesdrop'. She might get in serious trouble for that. She'd already eavesdropped on the medicine cats once, to learn of the prophecy-

- the prophecy! Why hadn't she gotten a message through their magical telepathic conversation board thing? Not a message in weeks, moons even. She knew that Turtleleaf had been the most frequent correspondent, but she normally talked to Flamewing a lot, they were good friends. But if nobody was messaging, were they planning something in person, that they didn't want Frostheart and Streamlight to know? Quickly, Frostheart sent a telepathic message - *Hi guys.* Nothing spectacular, but if Turtleleaf and Flamewing

didn't even respond to that, she would know that something was up. She got a reply from Streamlight almost immediately - *Hi Frostheart. Hey, Turtleleaf and Flamewing, have you been around recently?*

Frostheart's heart jumped. So, Streamlight had noticed it too? That they had been rather absent recently? Technically, so had she, but she'd never been a big conversation starter.

It took a while, but finally, a reply from Flamewing came in. *Sorry, I was recovering from battle injuries, I was sleeping a lot.* Turtleleaf's reply came after a moment. *I am deputy now and I have more important things to do than converse with unworthy other Clanners.*

*Rude,* Frostheart thought, shaking her head, but before she could answer with a neat comeback, Stonestar called a Clan meeting. Telepathic communication required attention and focus, so she couldn't just do it in the middle of a Clan meeting. Sighing in annoyance, she hurried below the High Rock, wondering what it could possibly be about. Something stupid, probably. 'My bodyguard isn't doing her job.' Now that she thought about it, she might be back on bodyguard duty. She wasn't a medicine cat anymore. That had been one of the perks of the role - no more Clan leader on your doorstep.

"Frostheart, come forward. You shall officially become my bodyguard, and I think that ought to be declared with a fiercer name. Your heart isn't frosted, so I see why my old name isn't quite fitting for you." The Clan leader's narrowed eyes pierced hers with an unwavering stare - at least she thought it was until he broke away a moment later. Her unwavering eyes followed him as he spoke. "You are like the fiercest, harshest wind, and for that, I name you Frostwind."

"Frostwind! Frostwind!"

*Half of them never even speak to me, and now they're chanting my name? What for?* Frostwind thought with a sigh. She didn't really see the point, plus some of them were annoying brats. Windecho had chanted her name, and that was surprising enough in itself. He of all cats? Her annoying, bratty brother? Still, she wasn't complaining. Maybe they were even coming close to making up for

all the bad things that had happened. She certainly hoped so. It was getting annoying, the way she had to glare at him EVERY TIME THEY PASSED.

"Yes, Frostwind! And you shall now officially be my bodyguard!" Stonestar added ecstatically. The real reason he had been excited about her ceremony, obviously. He valued his own protection even though he didn't care about what happened to his Clanmates, the cats he was supposed to care for. He had been a nice enough lad while he was a warrior, and she was speaking that even though she was younger than him, but the moment he ascended to leader, he had become a dimwit with trashy decisions. What had ruined him, a prophecy? Seriously? It seemed awfully odd, she was the one in the prophecy and she wasn't the one moping in the den wailing about it! Life moved on, you moved with the times, you didn't stand behind with them. He was really a sentimental fella. The old days were over, but he didn't accept that. He basically declared war on AutumnClan. They were in big trouble now, and then he and Mousestar had acted like total pals at the gathering!

"Frostwind! Don't zone out on me! Not after all I did for you!" Stonestar whined. Such a whiner! Who would ever like him? Was Sunstar out of her mind when she picked him for deputy? Well, she was probably traumatized after what happened with Silverlight, so maybe it was forgivable. But seriously, to pick someone that trashy? Frostwind rolled her eyes.

"Zone out on you? But you're so incredibly interesting! How could I do that, O Great Leader?" she crooned.

He scowled. Wasn't enjoying being coddled? Well, too bad for him, because all she had was coddling and flattery! What else was she supposed to do, tell him the truth? That she thought he was an idiot and the worst leader in the history of the Clans? Well, of course not, he'd be so incredibly offended and she'd lose her job! (Actually, was that bad? Maybe not, she didn't mind losing her job! It was a waste of time protecting their slob of a leader.)

She hurried away. She hoped she wasn't expected to stand another vigil. The nights were freezing during winter and it was only days away. Autumn wasn't any better, anyway. Prey was getting scarce,

but as she'd been the Clan's sole hunter until a few days ago, the forest wasn't exactly hunted dry, and she had always eaten well. She did notice some other Clan members were getting scrawnier, though. As the days went by, she noticed Skyfeather especially was one of the scrawniest cats around. How many times had he eaten since she'd ditched him? Their situation was awkward now, neither of them knowing what to say to the other. Old feelings remained and they definitely weren't gone, especially now that it was possible again, but because of words that had been said, they weren't entirely sure how they should make up. Frostwind had barely exchanged a few glances with the cat she had once poured her heart out to in the last few days. He had been hanging out a lot with his brother Blackfoot, but Blackfoot was more interested in flirting with Twilightmoon. Typical toms, what else did they do with life? Cloudbeam was busy trying to impress Twilightmoon too, even though she was EONS OLDER THAN HIM and Frostwind TOTALLY DIDN'T APPROVE, but of course Cloudbeam didn't listen, he was choosing for himself! Well, what a nutter! Perhaps she wasn't on such good terms with him after all, he was a crazy chap, trying to think she would ever like him! But he was having better luck than Blackfoot at least, Blackfoot seemed to be annoying Twilightmoon more than anything, and she had to suppress giggles every time she thought of them as a pair.

Despite insisting that her job as a bodyguard was super important, Stonestar was hinting that he was planning to give her one of Shimmerpelt's kits for her apprentice. Her kitting hadn't been too long ago yet Frostwind had never gone to see the newborns. She was going to be a complete stranger to the kitties by the time they reached six moons and were ready to be apprenticed. It was futile trying to tell that to Stonestar though. She had to give him credit, he was quite stubborn. When he had his heart and mind set on something, the decision did not get changed. One of the few things she could possibly like about him, the other thing being that he was quite quiet normally. When you hung around Skyfeather, you got used to noisy settings. He was definitely an extrovert, blabbering all day long and all night long, although he was playing the introvert now to fit in with Blackfoot. Feh, she could see right through him. He was trying to no avail, though. Blackfoot was such a flirter boy that he never noticed that his brother was tailing him around like a

lover. Seriously, toms were blur sometimes! How did he not see Skyfeather? His pelt was literally white! Well, since the ground was often covered with snow, maybe he camouflaged? But that sounded stupid the moment the thought was out of her mind, what was he, a rabbit? Nobody cared about camouflage, he caught prey well enough during summer, spring and autumn anyway.

Shimmerpelt had three kits, whose names Frostwind couldn't remember. Was it Tinykit or Smallkit for the first one, whatever, he was named after some ancient deputy, another name she couldn't remember, was it Tinytail or Smalltail, both names sounded really dumb and she couldn't guess. The other two kits were something like Boguskit and Hickorykit. Okay, maybe not Boguskit, but she was pretty sure about Hickorykit, and she double confirmed it with Stonestar. He knew their names. He was their uncle, for StarClan's sake, if she didn't know their names, she wouldn't expect herself to! So, Smallkit, Hickorykit and Somethingkit.

"What's your last niece's name?" Frostwind asked.

"I only have one niece. Her name is Hickorykit. Why?" Stonestar asked.

Frostwind nearly vomited. "HICKORYKIT IS A GIRL?"

"Yes," Stonestar said testily. "I don't see why not. If you're talking about the nephew other than Smallkit, it's Hairykit, why?"

Frostwind nearly vomited again. Hairykit! A really great name to give to a kit! The poor kit probably had no fur at all, with a name like that! "Blargh, Shimmerpelt really thinks of the worst names, doesn't she?"

"Are you insulting my sister?"

"No, of course not, who's your sister?"

"Shimmerpelt!"

"Oh, then yeah, I am."

The other thing about Stonestar was that his feelings could be

played with safely. He never held a grudge for more than a few hours and he seemed to forget all the times she'd insulted him. She'd called him a mouse-brained fox-heart at least three times, and he still called her his sincere and truthful bodyguard, who'd never spoken a word against him. He was either death or had a goldfish's memory. She'd rather it was the latter, because then at least she had gotten those insults in.

She was probably mad. No one knew why.

**Word count: 2223**

**Okay, this chapter was kind of weird. I was speed-typing it at probably 90wpm or faster, I'm serious, I type really fast. I got out 1200+ words in about twenty minutes. Pretty impossible, but... I had ideas today and I type fast. Today's chapter was mostly nonsense and I SINCERELY APOLOGIZE for that. I didn't mean for it to be nonsense but I'm a pretty nonsensical person SOOOOO... yeah.**

**Signing out, Frosty**

**14/7 (for me, anyway)**

# Chapter Seventeen

The next few, or rather many moons passed uneventfully. Mousestar was getting rather tetchy at gatherings, and he had given up with the childish nicknames, instead shooting Stonestar glares. There wasn't a hint of what had used to be a funny relationship between them, and Frostwind hasn't heard Stoney Stars or Mousey Stars in ages. Not that she was complaining, those were awful names. Regardless, tensions were rising between AutumnClan and SummerClan, which was bad.

It was the night of Shimmerpelt's kits' apprentice ceremonies. Smallkit, Hickorykit and Hairykit lined up excitedly under the High Rock, their mother cheering them on ecstatically. Frostwind watched, bemused. She had already been told which kit was hers. Hickorykit. Apparently, Smallkit and Hairykit would be apprenticed to Windecho and Cloudbeam, a very bad choice.

Recently, Twilightmoon had given birth to Cloudbeam's kits. Their names were Redkit, Talonkit and Flamekit, but Twilightmoon had given birth early so the kits were sickly scraps. They probably wouldn't make it through the winter, even though winter was ending already. Some cats were half-starved. Cloudbeam was skin and bone as he had been giving up his share of food for the sake of Twilightmoon. Of all the cats, Cloudbeam might well be the first to die. But Frostwind didn't dare say so, of course.

"Smallpaw, your mentor will be Windecho," Stonestar meowed to the unfortunate kit. Smallpaw bounded forward to his mentor, touching his nose eagerly to Windecho's. Windecho faced him with an expression of absolute boredom, and the youngling's excitement faded.

"Hickorypaw, your mentor will be Frostwind. Frostwind, stop lurking there!" Stonestar cried exasperatedly. "You are a special case, Hickorypaw, because your mentor is my bodyguard. Should there be any time when I need Frostwind with me, you will train under Lightpelt, is that understood?"

"Sure," Hickorypaw meowed uneasily. It could not have been clearer that she wished to just be normal and not have all these special things. She warily touched her nose to Frostwind's. Frostwind nodded approvingly. Sometimes apprentices needed chiding to do what they were supposed to do for their ceremonies, but Shimmerpelt's kits were a bright lot and seemed to not need that. Smart was good. Frostwind couldn't stand dumb.

"Lastly, Hairypaw, your mentor will be Cloudbeam," Stonestar finished. Cloudbeam glanced up in surprise even though he had already been told and staggered feebly up to his new apprentice. Hairypaw frowned, not getting a good first impression. "Also Cloudbeam, stop giving up your food. You will need energy to deal with him," Stonestar meowed, pointing a claw in Hairypaw's direction. Cloudbeam nodded weakly.

"That's all. Come on, chant!" Stonestar demanded irritably.

"Smallpaw! Hickorypaw! Hairypaw! Smallpaw! Hickorypaw! Hairypaw!" The Clan cheered loudly, Shimmerpelt and Duskcloud at their head, yelling their kits' names with all their might. Frostwind changed quietly, eagerness evaporating. Did she want an apprentice? Next thing she knew, Stonestar would probably name her deputy!

She could hardly remember the good old days when she fought for Summerstar. She had been so young then, so innocent. Summerstar had been a great leader, worthy of trust, one of the founders. He had known how to lead a Clan, not like their current leader.

"Frostwind! Can we go somewhere? Now! Please!" Hickorypaw begged.

"I don't know if Stonestar has plans for me," Frostwind meowed wryly.

"But if he had plans, he wouldn't have made you a mentor! Please!" Hickorypaw showed her baby doll eyes. She gained no sympathy from Frostwind, who was as unsympathetic as they got.

"Fine. Get ready in two minutes, we're going on a territory tour and

if you're one second late you're in trouble. Meet me at the entrance of camp. Your two minutes begins now... Start counting."

Hickorypaw shot off to the entrance before hurrying to a puddle to wash her paws. Frostwind watched her curiously, hiding her amusement. She'd forgotten how silly young cats were. But Hickorypaw definitely topped the silly bar. This wasn't going to do her any good, but it did make her a laughingstock. Frostwind could hardly contain her giggles as Hickorypaw ran back and forth around camp, doing this and that, before going into the medicine cat's den and coming out with Honeyleaf. At this Frostwind froze, edging away. She hadn't had a single conversation with the elderly medicine cat ever since she'd quit a few days ago. In fact, they hadn't even exchanged a single word like hello. She wasn't exactly keen on seeing and talking to her again. She moved to the entrance, still silently counting.

"One hundred and twenty! Hickorypaw, your two minutes are up, you're not here so we're not going out."

"What? No!" Hickorypaw hurried to Frostwind. "It's not that, please! Please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please"

"Do you have an explanation for your tardiness?" Frostwind asked her coldly. Her unwavering gaze met Hickorypaw's, and Frostwind saw fear in those deep green depths.

"I had to call Honeyleaf," Hickorypaw meowed breathlessly. "She thinks Twilightmoon has greencough!"

"Winter just ended a few days ago," Frostwind said.

"But there still isn't much prey to go round. It's still cold in the air. And she has kits to care for! I had to call the medicine cat!" Hickorypaw meowed desperately. "Can we please still go out?"

"I warned you," Frostwind meowed and turned away. "Go do the elders' ticks."

Hickorypaw's face fell. "Please! Please, Frostwind, don't make me do that, it's so awful, my brother said Windecho made him do it just

now and his paws were reeking, I don't want that to happen to my paws, too!"

"It would happen one way or another. Go do it."

Frostwind watched with satisfaction as her disgusted apprentice ran to the medicine den, coming back with a leaf filled with mouse bile. Her nose was wrinkling as she took it to the elders' den. Typical apprentices, all hating mouse bile and doing the elders' ticks. Not like Frostwind was an exception! She purred in amusement before noticing a familiar white pelt passing by and stopping. She looked up, her eyes meeting Skyfeather's for the first time in days, a questioning look in her deep violet depths.

Skyfeather looked extremely nervous and not very sure of himself. He kept hopping from one paw to another, like he didn't know what to say. Nevertheless, Frostwind waited patiently. He hadn't even spoken to her in a few days, not even just as Clanmates, and she felt he was trying to rectify his mistake. She should at least give him that chance, shouldn't she? She knew the feelings remained, for both of them, not just herself. It was just an extremely awkward situation. She'd led him to feel he was not good enough, made him sad, and then swapped right back to being a warrior. He hadn't understood her choices, but he'd gone along with them, but this time, he felt like she'd deliberately tried to hurt him, which was not true, obviously. It was Honeyleaf's fault for yammering away about stupid destiny.

"I... I'm sorry about the way I treated you," Skyfeather meowed quietly. "I should have supported you in whatever decision you made, not ignored you because you made me feel sad." His eyes peeled away from her and dropped to the ground. "What I did was wrong, and I'm sure you felt mad at me."

Frostwind used her tail to gently lift up his head, staring at him warmly. "It's fine, Skyfeather."

Somehow, those simple words changed something. His eyes lit up excitedly before he cleared his throat and meowed shyly, "Well, um, do you want to go hunting?"

"Just the.... two of us?"

"No," he said regretfully. "I'm leader of a hunting patrol. I noticed you just got rid of your apprentice, so.... yes?"

Frostwind nodded, blushing furiously.

Skyfeather picked up another two cats, Duskcloud and Dawnfire. They were siblings, quite nice ones, but Frostwind had never spoken to them. "So, how do you feel about Twilightmoon's new kits?" She tried to engage them in conversation. Duskcloud gave a tiny shrug, probably because he didn't believe his sister's new litter could ever compare to his own gorgeous kits (NOT that Frostwind agreed with him). Fortunately, Dawnfire brightened at the mention of her sister.

"They're super cute!" Dawnfire gushed. "Redkit is a quiet little mouse, but she's got amazing pelt design. You should see all these leaf-shaped red patches on her tortoiseshell pelt! Flamekit and Talonkit are feisty little things, they don't really like me going near them, I'm probably too soft? They're not like either of their parents, so I've no idea where that came from! Was Cloudbeam feisty when he was a kit?"

Frostwind shook her head instantly. Cloudbeam, feisty? As a kit, he'd constantly been living in Windecho's shadow! Not like that had changed, but now that he had kits, Cloudbeam finally had authority over some cats, his weeny children.

"Twilightmoon wasn't feisty?" she asked instead. She remembered Twilightmoon as a peaceful, quiet she-cat, but she'd mated with Cloudbeam who never talked himself, so that was a bit of a weird combination. Two cats who never talked, mating together? What did they do when they were together, just twine tails and sit down?

Dawnfire shook her head. "Nah, Twilightmoon was peacemaker. She hated all of my mini wars with Duskcloud, tried to put an end to them."

Duskcloud finally joined in. "We were saying, Twilightkit, these are regular kit games!" He purred in amusement, happy thoughts flooding in about his childhood days.

Frostwind purred along, glad she had struck up conversation, and the patrol split up to hunt. She ended up with Dawnfire, not Skyfeather, but she didn't really mind. A little time with another she-cat, a friend, wouldn't be too bad. She hadn't had friends in ages. With a jolt, she remembered she hadn't communicated with the other prophecy cats in ages, either!

*Hey guys! How's it going?* She sent her message before continuing the hunt. She'd sense their replies but she'd check them after the hunt. No use in becoming distracted and getting Dawnfire angry.

When they got back to camp, each carrying a heavy load of prey, Skyfeather went to talk with his father, Lightningstrike. Frostwind knew that the loss of his mother had been a little hard on him, but Silverlight was a devil! He had to have known that she'd have died off one way or another. She went to the warriors' den to presumably take a nap, but she was actually checking messages.

*Fine, how about you?* Streamlight had replied.

*You've been quiet. Usually you're like a chirpy chatterbox.* was Turtleleaf's disgruntled reply.

*N-n-nothing w-wrong, wh-why?* Flamewing's answer was like a squeak.

Frostwind gave a light purr of amusement. *Well, yeah, we've been a bit quiet. You too are a chatterbox, Turtleleaf. It was listening to your silly conversations that I realized this chatterbox thing existed, you know.*

Turtleleaf didn't find it funny. *Well, it was because of your stupid antics that we stopped using this conversation thing! Who wants to talk to you?*

*I don't mind,* came Streamlight's timid reply.

That obviously wasn't helping Turtleleaf's anger levels. *Well, you talk to her, then! I've got better things to do than daydream in camp!*

*Flamewing, you aren't really going to bring destruction, are you?* Streamlight asked the question they'd asked many times over.

They'd always got the same answer: Of course not, why would I? but this time was different.

*I don't know, maybe if I feel like it.* Flamewing's reply had a dark edge to it, like he was somehow angry.

*You can't just bring destruction because you feel like it!* Frostwind fired at him.

*You can't just kill people because you feel like it, either! If you can kill people for fun, why can't I bring destruction?* Flamewing blabbered.

*You think I kill people for fun?* Frostwind demanded, flabbergasted.

*Of course you do!* Flamewing was really getting furious now.

*Guys, stop. Let's stop daydreaming and let's get back to Clan stuff! We can continue this conversation next time!* Streamlight pleaded.

*Until next time, murderer,* Flamewing hissed, his words full of fury. Frostwind shivered at the ferocity of the message.

*Until next time, Flamewing!* Frostwind responded in a brighter tone, hoping to let the conversation get a little lighter as it ended.

*You're not fit to say my name!* Flamewing growled. *I call you murderer and you call me destruction-bringer, fine! But do not call me Flamewing!*

*Murderer isn't for me, sorry. And what kind of shoddy name is destruction-bringer? It's so troublesome to say. So what should I call you, Flamey?* Frostwind started to mock him, the thought of ending the conversation nicely just flying away.

*No! Destruction-bringer! Or DB! Whatever! I don't care! Just not Flamewing!* Flamewing howled.

*Or whatever? Okay, I'll call you Flamekit, thank you,* Frostwind sniggered.

*GUYS, MY CLANMATES ARE COMING FOR ME. BYE!* Streamlight cried before leaving.

As she said it, a gentle paw prodded Frostwind.

*Oof, mine too! Bye Flamey!* Frostwind added with a grin.

She opened her eyes, looking into the fierce green eyes of Honeyleaf.

**WORD COUNT: 2117**

**GASP! I finally got a chapter out! I'm so sorry for making you all wait!**

# Chapter Eighteen

Frostwind gasped out loud, jumping to her paws. "Don't scare me like that! You're pretty respected for a medicine cat, but that doesn't mean you can go around scaring the living daylights out of us!" She bent double, wheezing. "You almost gave me a heart failure! StarClan save me," she whispered, her voice a wheeze, too. Honeyleaf, miraculously, did not apologize.

"I'm not anything of what you said," the deep golden medicine cat meowed testily. "I am not respected. Have you noticed not one cat here listens to my opinion? Even Stonestar doesn't! Insolent cats! And how dare you say that! I never scare the living daylights out of people!"

Frostwind glanced at Honeyleaf, her jaw hanging agape, then used her tail to lightly but obviously tap herself on the shoulder. Honeyleaf scowled.

"I didn't scare you at all! Quit whining! You never see me at my worst, Hawkfeather does, and he doesn't whine half as much as you! Would you mind telling me what you were doing?" Honeyleaf demanded.

"Uh, napping?" Frostwind asked irritatedly. Did Honeyleaf ever shut up? Of course she was napping, what else?

"No, you were mumbling. You said something about Flamewing. Are you seeing him in secret? What about Skyfeather?" Honeyleaf's eyes narrowed to slits.

"Quit assuming. I have no relationship whatsoever with Flamewing! Why would I?" Frostwind snapped. She almost unsheathed her claws and took a slash at the infuriating medicine cat's face, but she wasn't about to do a Silverlight. She might not like Honeyleaf, but she had stopped Silverlight from killing her when she was just a kit, and to wound Honeyleaf now would make her seem like a hypocrite.

"You're sure, right? As a medicine cat, you aren't even allowed to have a mate, plus he's from another Clan," Honeyleaf pressed.

Frostwind faced Honeyleaf in full force, her pretty purple eyes seeming like glowing amethyst, piercing Honeyleaf's green, and while the golden-furred medicine cat had always seemed intimidating to many, even she quelled before the anger of the most feared she-cat in SummerClan.

"I am not a medicine cat," Frostwind hissed, her voice low and furious. "Never forget that. To stoop as low as you, joining you in your role? What do you really do, terrorize people?"

Honeyleaf blinked innocently, seemingly unfazed. "Why, you do quite a lot of that, Frostwind! Perhaps I should join your gang?" But she was instantly silenced by the icy glare that followed her comment, and Frostwind was mildly surprised to find that Honeyleaf was shaking with fear, her usually confident bright green eyes appearing weak and unsure.

"Leave me alone," Frostwind commanded, and though she bore no authority, Honeyleaf retreated away. "Wait." Honeyleaf froze, looking back. "What did you come here for?" Frostwind asked in a lighter tone.

"Your brother. I believe Cloudbeam is that white cat, remember? But then, he's got kits now. I approached him too late, and caught him with Twilightmoon. Of course she stood up for him and said no. They're both meek but Twilightmoon is no weakling. She said a straight out no and Cloudbeam just nodded. I don't know if he truly meant to reject my invitation! It was her, all her, and I can't say a thing because she's the great esteemed Summerstar's daughter!"

"I don't believe any of it is my problem," Frostwind meowed warily and she walked away, not daring to face the cold fury that had appeared on Honeyleaf's face. The golden-furred medicine cat didn't like to be refused, but at a time like this, it had to be.

Frostwind paused, confused, when she saw Stonestar had called another Clan meeting. "What's up?" she asked Skyfeather casually. "Is there a gathering tonight?"

"Does it look like full moon, mouse-brain?" Skyfeather teased, lightly flicking her ear with his tail. "No, I've no idea what's going on. Amberfrost doesn't look happy though."

Stonestar yowled, "CATS OF SUMMERCLAN! AutumnClan has become a major problem with al their petty uniting efforts. Our border patrol met Mousestar himself this morning! We attack AutumnClan at dawn."

"Are you sure that's wise?" Skyfeather called in. He was a respectable warrior and most would listen to his opinion. The other warriors glanced nervously up at Stonestar to see what he would do.

"Yes, it is. Are you backing away from a fight?" Stonestar snarled.

"No," said Skyfeather, seemingly unfazed. "I'm wondering if we're getting ourselves killed unnecessarily."

"You don't have to participate!" Stonestar hissed at him.

Skyfeather blinked in surprise. "Oh, is that so? I won't, then."

Stonestar nodded, seeming to find his response satisfactory, then began going through in detail their battle plan. Frostwind winced as she refrained from pointing out the numerous flaws and all those places where anything that went wrong could jeopardize the entire plan. Naturally, she had to keep that to herself. Stonestar was a real pain in the tail but he was still Clan leader and she was powerless compared to him. Skyfeather sat stiff and rigid, and Frostwind laid her tail on him.

"Are you okay?" she asked softly, her voice laden with concern.

"You're going to fight, aren't you?"

The ferocity in his voice scared her. "Of course I am," Frostwind replied smoothly.

Skyfeather watched her intently for a moment. There seemed to be a slight sadness in his voice, and he eyed her with concern that he always had. "You're going to be alright, aren't you?" he asked softly.

Frostwind smiled grimly back. "I've really no idea. But I haven't died yet, have I?"

Skyfeather stared back, and his soft stare hardened into a teasing glare. "You think that's comforting, do you?"

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"It's dawn."

"Who's Dawn?" Frostwind asked, arousing with a yawn as she stretched her paws out, her tail going rigid. She surveyed her surroundings. The one who had spoken was Skyfeather, his expression grimmer than ever, and he was stiff as a board. His tail wasn't even flicking back and forth like it usually did.

"Dawn isn't a person. Dawn is a time, and the time is war time," he responded, his voice just as grim as he looked. It didn't suit him, even though he'd always looked nice when he was serious. Frostwind liked the funny version of him better. The one that made jokes and treated the world like a joke. But that kind of cat just evaporated when war came, seriousness taking a hold of their jovial personality. Like he was now.

He met her eyes and her own concern for him was reflected there, concern for her. She didn't know why he was worried. She never died. She just killed more cats than she wanted to. But now AutumnClan was mainly made up of rogues, it wasn't like she was doing much but killing outsiders. Still, killing was killing and it made her and him uncomfortable.

His eyes linked with hers, and unspoken question there.

"I'll try not to kill too many," Frostwind responded earnestly, but his doubtful gaze landed on her and she felt a shiver go down her spine. "You have to trust me," she meowed evenly. If he didn't trust her, they could never be mates. And that was what he wanted, wasn't it? They were past that stage where he was moaning about her playing with his feelings. They were past those mistakes, and maybe it was time to move on. They were almost there but the level of trust wasn't there. He didn't trust her to stay alive, did he? Or

was that doubt because he thought she would kill many cats? "I really mean it," she added in a cross whisper.

"I know you do," he responded levelly. "I also know you'll kill as many of those rogues as you can to save a single Clan member." Skyfeather's eyes were ice, but the steeliness in there was not directed at her.

"Of course I would. They're my Clanmates and it's my duty." Frostwind's voice cracked. She hated the way Skyfeather turned her soft.

"Don't go with them," he begged.

Frostwind turned her back on him, not daring to see his face. "It's not something I can back out of. Even if I say no, Stonestar will recruit me into it somehow. I'm his stupid bodyguard, I never wanted to be but he wants to be safe and it seems like I'm the only cat for the job! I never wanted it, okay? Please... please don't judge me for it." She felt herself sink to the ground. "I'm done being judged. There's no one who can judge me that I care about anymore. But there's you, and you won't, will you? I trust you." But did she? As she turned back to meet those cold blue eyes, she knew she didn't trust this Skyfeather. She trusted the jovial one, but when he turned this serious, he wasn't the cat she knew anymore. He was someone else, someone alien.

Someone she didn't know.

"I love you," Skyfeather said finally. "Come back."

"I will," Frostwind promised. That she could do at least. Surviving wasn't a problem, it never had been. Meeting his eyes with confidence for the first time, she saw his muscles relax as he finally believed her for the first time.

Skyfeather moved forward and gave her a loving lick on the ear before slowly padding away. He was on a hunting patrol because he was one of the few cats remaining in camp. Frostwind cautiously bid him goodbye, making it sound not too severe. It wasn't the goodbye after all. She wasn't going to die or anything like that.

She followed the battle party. There were quite a few of them: Branchclaw, Yellowtail, Blackfoot, Dogtail, Dawnfire, Duskcloud, Ashspots, Stonestar, Amberfrost and herself. Majority of the warriors. Her pelt prickled with unease. If someone came to the camp while they were away attacking, the remaining cats might not make it.

"CHARGE!" Stonestar howled.

The cats in the battle patrol streaked away towards AutumnClan territory, their determination a match for Frostwind's unease. She didn't want to do this. AutumnClan cats were slightly evil, but did they deserve this at all? Many of them were rogue-turned-warriors, and they probably had no idea what was at stake for them. Then again, Mousestar had to have given them some sort of explanation for the absence of his warriors, so they probably knew about all the deaths. *The deaths I caused,* she thought grimly.

*Hey! How's it going, Frostwind?* Streamlight's jovialness came through the communication line. Frostwind shook herself. She couldn't be distracted by Streamlight now! She had a battle to fight.

*Not now, I'm busy, sorry,* Frostwind thought back, and hoped that would silence Streamlight.

She hoped that wouldn't alert Turtleleaf. It was sad that their communication line was public. If Turtleleaf associated Frostwind's 'being busy' with attacking her Clan, then the surprise attack would be foiled. Not like they were really after the element of surprise. They were running at full speed, many twigs cracking and dead leaves crunching beneath their paws. Stonestar evidently wasn't going after surprise. They were making enough noise to wake up the entire AutumnClan!

"STOP!" Stonestar yowled loudly.

Well, if their movement hadn't woken AutumnClan, that had. Who asked him to yowl so loudly? Frostwind flicked her ear in irritation. If she'd been made leader of this battle party... wait, she didn't want to be leader of the battle party. That gave her responsibility, and she did not deal well with that.

"Approach silently," Stonestar cautioned.

Frostwind wasn't the only one who rolled her eyes. Dawnfire and Duskcloud muttered something to each other, and Frostwind caught the word 'mouse-brain'. Evidently, Stonestar had too, as he turned back to silence them both with a glare, but he said nothing, apparently deciding to follow his own order of keeping silent. Frostwind tried not to be impressed by Stonestar's stunning self-control. He never followed orders even if they were made by himself. The fact that he refrained from loudly and publicly reprimanding them was impressive, and she almost told him so. Then she noticed how nervous the usually calm and composed deputy Amberfrost looked and held herself back from doing so. If Amberfrost was anxious about this approach, it was not good news.

"We're almost there!" Stonestar hissed, his body flat against the ground, rustling and crunching leaves as he moved ever so slowly.

"Could we just get a move on? We're making more noise this way!" Duskcloud hissed back at him.

"Are you questioning me?" Stonestar snarled, his voice still half in a whisper.

"Yes, I am! Nothing is getting done!" Duskcloud snarled back. Frostwind had to muffle her laughter.

"Well, go back to camp then if you don't want to fight!" Stonestar hissed furiously. He continued moving on, but was more careful to avoid the dead leaves this time. Snorting in derision, Duskcloud followed. The rest of the battle patrol followed too, but whatever confidence they had had in Stonestar had disappeared. Frostwind herself was silently admonishing herself for actually thinking this battle plan might work.

By the time AutumnClan's camp was in sight, it was well past sunrise. Stonestar's slow and not-very-silent approach had cost them precious time and the fact that everyone should be sleeping. They had not only wasted time but their energy as well. Some of them were already moaning about sore paws.

"This is it," Stonestar breathed. "Are we ready?"

"We are," Frostwind meowed dully.

"Then let's go."

**Word count: 2184**

**Man, I'm finally publishing a chapter after forever, I'm so sorry. If you're lucky, I may start updating regularly on Fridays. It's working out as a good day for me. But it really depends on my mood, so I won't be a steady updater. Once my exams are over, though... I may be in update frenzy. but that's only after 5th October.**

# Chapter Nineteen

"Then let's go."

The SummerClan cats filed into AutumnClan's camp, shouting battle cries (Frostwind was not among those) and charging in headfirst. Frostwind rolled her eyes and started a more calculative approach. She went for the nursery first, only to find it empty and half-abandoned. When was the last time they had had new kits? Slightly disappointed by her further waste of time, Frostwind continued to the warriors' den. It was empty. She looked around, and realized her Clanmates were swiping madly at empty air.

"Pause!" Frostwind shouted, and they were shocked into submission. "There isn't anybody here," she finished everyone's thought.

"No! They must be hiding somewhere! Check everywhere! Under the moss! Fresh-kill pile! Leader's den, nursery, elders' den, I don't know, check everywhere!" Stonestar blabbered. Everyone looked from Frostwind to him, then shrugged innocently and walked towards Frostwind, as if acknowledging her as leader over him. "She's my bodyguard and she speaks on my behalf, but this time you have spoken out of turn." He looked over at Frostwind and glowered at her, and she gave him a tame, docile look of submission. He grinned in satisfaction, unaware that she was mocking him. "So, we look everywhere. They have to be hiding here somewhere."

"On the contrary," Dawnfire put in, "they could be waiting to ambush us, or they could be attacking somewhere else."

"All of them?" Stonestar snorted. "Not likely."

"Stonestar," Branchclaw meowed quietly. "The fresh-kill pile smells like there was fresh prey there a few moments ago."

"Your warrior's right," came a cackling voice from the top of the leader's den.

Mousestar emerged into sight, his warriors trailing behind him.

"I knew we made too much noise on the way in," Duskcloud muttered under his breath, seemingly unconcerned about the severity of the situation.

Stonestar looked around at his warriors with confidence, then frowned uncertainly when he saw that his confidence was not reflected in those faces. Only Frostwind had a very neutral expression, her real emotions of pure calm and no panic at all disguised underneath a blank mask.

"This one is interesting!" Mousestar waggled a paw in Frostwind's direction. "She isn't cowering! What did you do to her to insert your overconfidence, Stonestar?"

"Oh, quite on the contrary," Turtleleaf meowed contemptuously from beside him. "That one's Frostwind. I know her. She's quite strong, actually. Remember?"

"Oh, her." Mousestar's previously snide voice had become slightly more panicked.

"It won't happen again. We were ill prepared the previous time," Turtleleaf soothed.

"Gee whiz," Duskcloud grumbled. "What a waste of time, listening to petty squabbles."

Frostwind shot him a warning look but not in time and the words were already out. Mousestar's eyes grew alight with fury. "ATTACK THEM!" he shrieked, and his Clan leapt off the roof of the leader's den, pouncing on the SummerClan cats as they slashed and bit them viciously. Frostwind caught her first attacker and spun him round, throwing him into the wall of Mousestar's den where he slumped to the ground, unconscious.

Mousestar's eyes glittered as he too jumped off. Instead of engaging Stonestar who was dashing for him, Mousestar started attacking Frostwind with all of his might. "You're the only one here worthy of my time," he sneered. "Deputy, get him!" He pointed wildly at

Stonestar and Turtleleaf leapt for him, albeit reluctantly. She clearly wanted the challenge and her Clan leader wasn't giving it to her.

Frostwind fought off Mousestar's wild attacks with increasing ease. She could have taken him and Turtleleaf on at the same time, but she drew it out, only cutting Mousestar a little here and there, ripping away fur here and there, not injuring him badly. She smiled broadly as she continued fighting. This was her forte, fighting evil like him, and she flourished as she fought, relishing the time spent. It was something to be savored because not every day provided easy opportunities. Her love life had given her many headaches, but fighting off Mousestar? Oh, that was easy, easier than catching prey. He was like a kit, flailing blunt claws at a warrior who watched him with amusement, swiftly blocking any blow he dared throw at her. Mousestar was getting increasingly desperate and was pulling off less flashy and more unpredictable moves, finally proving some sort of challenge. One time, he jumped up and did a weird back flip in the air, exposing many places but she wasn't able to hit him. Still, he landed a few inches south of her and missed completely, instead snagging his claws on the ground.

"Are you out of practice?" Frostwind asked with mock concern. Not that she approved of mocking, but to aggravate him and watch that expression? Oh, completely worth it. Anyway, talking made fighting harder and she was always up for the challenge. She soon realized that even Mousestar's desperate attacks were following a predictable sequence. Still, she refused to let her guard down, not moving instinctively to block him each time. That would be her eventual downfall when he finally mixed up the sequence. The fact that he could play out the sequence, though... that was worrying. It meant that despite the increasing worry on his face, he still had a level of calm inside of him, allowing him to do it.

"I'm not out of practice," he said, his voice lucid and calm. "No, no, not at all. Don't you think you're, maybe, underestimating me?"

Frostwind smiled wickedly. "If you think I am, try your luck."

"Oh no. Underestimating my fighting skills is one thing. What do you think I've been doing, all this while?" Mousestar asked softly. He stopped fighting and, shocked, she stopped too, facing him with

confusion rather than anger.

"What are you playing at?" she demanded.

"Look around you. What do you see?"

Frostwind followed his orders despite hating him completely and finally realized the mistake she had made. By drawing out their fight, she had basically refused her Clanmates' pleas for help. Their dead bodies were strewn across the field, staining the green grass to red, making it look like a field of roses and yet the impact of moving across them were the thorns digging into flesh. She faced Mousestar, the shock frozen on her face. Only Stonestar was alive, and he was staggering around, pale and losing an increasing amount of blood. He looked weak, and the fact that he was still alive proved that he had lost some lives before this. Turtleleaf was still fighting him, her fighting style exactly enough to counter his own. Terror rose into a scream, and Frostwind couldn't quite remember what happened next.

She was screaming was all she remembered. Cursing herself but cursing them too, and after screaming herself hoarse, she looked around and saw more dead bodies lying on the grass. Mousestar staggered weakly to his feet, his body covered in not his own blood but hers and his Clanmates'.

"What have you done?" he snarled, his voice ragged. "Do you know how much effort I spent putting this Clan together? All those unwilling rogues I've been persuading slowly! And now they all died. How could ever fix my Clan again, Frostwind? Explain yourself! You killer, you murderer, you destroyer of lives..."

"Do you sound like you're saying something stupid? Because those all mean the same things," Frostwind said coldly. She spoke with deep confidence but on the inside she was shattered. She had broken the promise she had made to Skyfeather not to kill too many. She'd thought she was keeping it while she fought Mousestar but really nothing had ever changed. Stonestar was lying on the ground further down, and he looked weak but alive. Turtleleaf was nowhere to be seen. She wasn't dead either. It was... what was going on?

"You destroyed my Clan!" Mousestar snarled, his voice hollow but furious. "You broke everything I worked so hard to remake. What have you done, you monster?!"

MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.MONSTER. MONSTER. MONSTER.

The words echoed, over and over in her head. She was a monster. She didn't deserve kindness, how many lives had she killed? She'd killed at least all of those rogues in the clearing, she'd basically gotten her Clanmates killed. She'd gotten her own Clan leader killed multiple times too. She really was a monster, wasn't she? She was the very thing Skyfeather feared and she loved him while he couldn't trust her. The love was mutual but the trust was one-sided and suddenly, she couldn't blame him. Who would trust her? She was a broken mess, a bloody killer and nobody would ever understand her.

"I'll leave you alive," she choked, moving backwards.

"What would you do that for?!" Mousestar snarled. "At least give me the same bloody fate you gave my Clanmates! AutumnClan is destroyed. You think I can ever fix that, do you? Do you ever think before you do anything?!"

"Of course I think," Frostwind snarled. "I just don't think it through. And you're right, what's one death compared to so many?"

But she couldn't kill him. She stood rooted to the ground, refusing to admit she was the monster he called her. She was something more than that, she just knew it! But all she could hear was that word, the word that would tear her apart from the inside, shredding

her heart and her sanity. Something nothing would ever fix and she would die with it. She just wanted to die. But then StarClan wouldn't take her, she'd go to the Dark Forest. What StarClan cat killed as much as she did? She sank to the ground.

"Kill me," she croaked.

She was completely at Mousestar's mercy.

She closed her eyes and awaited the finishing claw. Her eyes screwed tightly shut, her breathing ragged, she waited patiently.

It never came.

She opened her eyes, barely daring to do so and stared into the fierce eyes of Stonestar.

"You did well, my bodyguard," he said quietly. "But you must learn to finish the job. Our Clanmates are not all dead. Amberfrost and Ashspots made it but that's all. I'll carry Ashspots, you take Amberfrost. Don't drop her she's in a fragile state. And I want you acting as temporary deputy."

"No."

"No?" His eyebrows lifted. "I won't hear a no from you. That was an order."

"You can refuse that post," Frostwind choked. "I'm not ready for it. I just got an apprentice and I'm training her well. I can't take on an additional post. In fact, could you assign someone to take over my apprentice and Skyfeather's duties for a short while, please? I think I need him right now."

Stonestar gave her a stony stare. "You think I'm so powerful that I can strip you of your duties, do you?"

"You are. You're Clan leader. Anything in the Clan is within your power. I've done so much for you. I broke myself for you. The reason I'm in this state at all is because of you. What's one small favor in return for all I've sacrificed for you?"

"It's not a small favor," he said grumpily. "But fine. Only because I kind of like you. You're a stupid bodyguard with no brains but all brawns, but I can work with that."

"And you're any better, are you?" Frostwind challenged.

His eyes fired up. "I'M MUCH, MUCH BETTER! WHO DO YOU THINK SAVED YOU FROM MOUSESTAR, SOME GHOST? WHO'S HELD THE CLAN TOGETHER ALL THESE MOONS AFTER SUNSTAR'S DEATH? WHO'S THE ONE WORKING ON UNITING SEASONCLAN AGAIN? WHO'S HANDLING ALL THE BIG PROBLEMS AND WHO'S TRYING TO KEEP HIS BODYGUARD SANE SO SHE CAN DO HER STUPID MOUSE-BRAINED JOB? WHO'S DOING EVERYTHING? ME! AND YOU'RE AN INGRATE, AREN'T YOU!"

Frostwind stood unfazed. "Do you think it looks to me like you're doing anything?"

"It should!" he fired back.

"No, it really doesn't. It looks to me like you're a pretty mouse-brained kittypet who turned up and coincidentally became Clan leader through a mixture of luck and bad choice on Sunstar's part. So if you want me to take you and your so-called efforts seriously, the answer is no."

**Word count: 2000**

**Chapter Eighteen was a quarter written when I started writing today but wow, I'm surprised with my progress. Two chapters in a day? To all you happy readers of Froststar's Destiny, good for you. :) Have a nice day, thanks for reading! You all rock!**

**~ Frostwind88**

# Chapter Twenty

Frostwind and Stonestar reached camp in a state of unhappiness, their Clanmates lying on their backs. Frostwind dumped Amberfrost in the clearing and stormed away. She left Stonestar to answer the questions. It was time for the midday meal and she snatched up a rabbit, feeling ravenous, before devouring it quickly.

Someone dropped a sparrow beside her and she looked up, ready to lash out. Her gaze softened when she recognized Skyfeather staring at her with his usual jovial expression, but it looked forced, and she could sense the grimness underneath. He sat down uncertainly and a little fearfully. Frostwind let out a long sigh.

"Please stop acting scared around me," she said flatly. He acted as if he had heard nothing, settling down and casually taking bites out of his sparrow.

Skyfeather finally looked up. "How many died on our side?" he asked softly and gently. Not something she was expecting.

"I'm not really sure," she whispered, and her voice trembled. "Stonestar, Amberfrost, Ashspots and myself are the only survivors."

The moment she mentioned the name Ashspots, Skyfeather visibly relaxed. They were brothers after all. Frostwind smiled nervously back.

"I killed a lot too," she said grimly. "I'm sorry for that. Please believe me."

"I believe you," he answered simply. "You have no motivation to lie. Frostwind, if you hadn't stepped in, yes, slaughtering the enemy but if you hadn't done so, many more would have died on our side." He stood up. "I'm not going to stop you anymore, but I am going to ask you one question: Is this mindless killing affecting you at all?"

Frostwind's thoughts were drawn back to the fight. She'd been

called a monster and she believed it so much she had asked Mousestar to kill her. She swallowed painfully, facing Skyfeather with as much courage as she could muster.

"I'm a monster," she said simply. "I'll live with it. Do I look dying to you?"

"You look troubled," Skyfeather answered easily. "And you're not a monster. Can you admit to yourself that there was no reason for the deaths you caused?"

"There wasn't," she whispered weakly.

"There was. I wasn't there, Frostwind, but to save lives sometimes you have to take lives and that's what you've been doing. You never meant to kill anyone. I believe you on that."

"But I don't believe myself anymore."

Frostwind's terrified eyes met Skyfeather's, her fear visible. "I don't believe myself. Why do you believe me?"

"Because I love you unconditionally," Skyfeather replied immediately. "It doesn't matter who you become."

Frostwind lowered her eyes to the ground. She didn't have a response and she didn't want to give one. She wanted to end their conversation there with him stating his undying faith to her but it was wrong. He shouldn't place his trust in her. Yet she didn't dare to tell him, for fear of losing him again.

Skyfeather watched her intently and Frostwind knew he sensed her reluctance. His patient blue eyes bored into hers and she stared into that soft sky, wanting it to be the real thing. A place with no death.

"It's who I am," she choked. "And I'm sorry I couldn't be the one for you."

"You're sorry? But you are the one for me. Look at me, Frostwind."

She dared look up. He stared down at her, his face gentle, loving and concerned.

"I love you, Frostwind. Nothing's going to change that," Skyfeather whispered.

"I love you too," she whispered back.

***

"Frostwind, wake up."

Frostwind woke up groggily and looked up to see the sun hadn't even risen yet. There were orange-gold streaks in the sky, indicating it was dawn. She looked up lazily to stare at Skyfeather, groaning.

"What did you wake me up for?" she complained, rolling over.

"You have an apprentice you know," Skyfeather pointed out mildly. Frostwind frowned, thinking hard, and then her thoughts drifted back to Hickorypaw.

"I do, don't I?" she asked in wonder. After all she had done, she'd still been given an apprentice. And she didn't even want the apprentice.

Skyfeather nodded with false grimness. "Yes, you do," he said in the most solemn tone she had ever heard.

Grinning, she cuffed him over the ear causing him to stagger backwards but both their eyes were alight and playful.

"Go wake up your lazy furball," Skyfeather pressed.

Frostwind nodded, the grin sliding off her face as she glanced in the direction of the apprentices' den. It was going to be a long day.

She trudged there to find Hairypaw and Smallpaw already up and doing warm-up exercises. Their mentors, Cloudbeam and Windecho, gave Frostwind disapproving stares, even though her white brother's stare was soft and not very challenging.

"You're late to wake up your own apprentice! Heh! Someone else should've gotten her," Windecho sneered, like Hickorypaw was some sort of prize. Frostwind wrinkled her nose. Who'd want

Hickorypaw for a prize? Not her, definitely.

"I didn't even want her, what's your problem?" Frostwind demanded shrilly. "I was fighting a real battle yesterday! What were you doing again? Oh, probably sleeping, no?"

"I was training my apprentice!" Windecho snarled, baring his teeth.

"Oh, so helpful," Frostwind droned.

He almost lunged to attack her but Cloudbeam lay his tail reassuringly on Windecho's back. "Don't fight," the white tom meowed softly. "It isn't worth it, brother."

Windecho stared back at Cloudbeam and his gaze softened for a split second before he turned back to Frostwind with as much anger and annoyance as before. "Well, go on and wake her up," he growled impatiently.

"I'm not letting you wait for me," Frostwind meowed mildly. "Why don't you go first?"

Surprisingly, Windecho nodded and dragged Smallpaw away. Sighing, Frostwind entered the apprentices' den to find Hickorypaw on her back, sleeping peacefully. Frostwind gave her a hard jab in the side. Who cared if she was a tiny apprentice? She'd have to learn to deal with pain eventually, and if she knew she would wake up to pain, she'd wake up earlier.

Hickorypaw let out a small squeal of pain and her eyes widened in terror. Her side had been soft and not muscled. Not that Frostwind could expect anything better of a kit, but it couldn't stay that way.

"F-F-Frostwind! What did you do that for?" Hickorypaw squealed, getting up and rubbing her side painfully.

"You're a late riser aren't you. I don't put up with that. It's already a little later than dawn, get moving," Frostwind growled.

"Are we seeing half the territory today?" Hickorypaw asked.

"Why half?" Frostwind narrowed her eyes.

"Because I saw the other half with Windecho and Cloudbeam yesterday," Hickorypaw replied.

Frostwind shrugged. "Alright, then you can lead me through that first half, can't you?"

Hickorypaw's eyes lit up, but then flooded with panic. "But I don't really know my way around there... I mean, it was only my first time yesterday... show you around, really?"

Frostwind smirked. "If you're not confident, then you don't know it all that well, do you? We're seeing the entire territory today, and we're running through it."

"Running?" Hickorypaw's eyes lit up with alarm. "A-are you sure? I mean, I'd probably get tired..."

"A warrior cannot be fearful of these things. You're too soft and that isn't going to work," Frostwind responded coldly. "Follow me. Let's go."

Frostwind was used to battling for hours and hours at a time and she ran the first half of the territory with no problems, and flicked off a bead of sweat at the end. She had slowed down on several occasions to let her slow apprentice catch up. Even then, Hickorypaw was lagging behind, and she practically collapsed to the ground next to Frostwind.

"Could we take a longer break this time?" she whispered. Frostwind's earlier breaks had been for about three seconds which Hickorypaw had used to catch up to her mentor. When Frostwind's cold violet eyes narrowed at her, she slumped in defeat. "I'm not sure if I've got enough energy left to run the next half," she mumbled.

Frostwind smiled. She hadn't expected her apprentice to. "No, that isn't a problem. We're walking the next half while we let you familiarize with it."

"Could we.... ah... sit down?" Hickorypaw asked hopefully.

"Can you move while sitting down?" Frostwind asked.

Hickorypaw sat down and scooted forwards a little.

"Nope, too slow. Come on, let's move."

From that point onwards, Frostwind stopped listening whenever Hickorypaw complained about sore paws and tiredness. Not wanting to get lost, Hickorypaw had no choice but to continue after her mentor, no matter how fast or how long Frostwind was walking. Frostwind watched as her apprentice perspired furiously, barely managing to keep up. This would be a good exercise for her. She'd be training her to run laps every single day after this. Just like she had done.

When they finally made it back to camp, Hickorypaw was trembling from head to toe, her sore paws almost unable to keep herself up, and she barely made it to the fresh-kill pile before crashing. Shimmerpelt caught sight of her daughter and hurried over, covering her in loving licks, before glancing questioningly at Frostwind. The look didn't come across as friendly, and Frostwind returned it with her icy stare.

"What did you do to her?" Shimmerpelt demanded shrilly, leaving Duskcloud to look after their kit as she stormed up to Frostwind, furious.

"Nothing," Frostwind replied mildly and began to move away.

"Why is she so tired?" Duskcloud added.

Frostwind shrugged. "To be honest, I don't know. Isn't this normal for a brand new apprentice? I showed her the territory, no probs."

Shimmerpelt and Duskcloud glanced worriedly at each other. "The whole territory?" Duskcloud asked softly.

"Got a problem?" Frostwind responded.

"You walked her through the WHOLE territory?!" Shimmerpelt yowled. "That's too far for a young cat like Hickorypaw! No wonder she's tired! What else did you do, make her climb trees?!"

"No," Frostwind said with a sigh. "We just ran the first half since

she'd already seen it before. Don't worry, I wasn't going full speed."

Shimmerpelt stared at Frostwind like she had just grown two extra heads. "Are you CRAZY? Do you think I CARE that you weren't running full speed? Look what you've done to my daughter!"

"She looks alright to me," Frostwind stated mildly. "It's you who's going berserk, but I haven't done anything to you. Did you wake up too early this morning and that's why you're crabby?"

Shimmerpelt stared at Duskcloud for help.

"Let it go, Shimmerpelt," Duskcloud said softly. "Hickorypaw will be fine after some rest. Maybe wake her up a little later tomorrow?" he added pleadingly to Frostwind.

"No can do, my good man," Frostwind answered. "We'll wake up at the same time as ever, dawn. I had a tiring day yesterday and my mate had to wake me up. Did that stop me from going right away to wake her up? No! She had a tiring day today. I'll wake her up at dawn. I don't see any problems with this, and neither should you."

"Her paws may still be sore..." Shimmerpelt expressed her worries and only received an eyeroll in return.

"Look, I don't care about her sore paws. Mine aren't sore so as far as I'm concerned, hers shouldn't be either. If they are sore then she's too soft, and training like this should get her muscled up. She'll be grateful to me later. Anyway, she's turning in early tonight so she should get a suitable amount of sleep today anyway, won't she?" Frostwind asked mildly.

Shimmerpelt looked flabbergasted by Frostwind's lack of concern for Hickorypaw, and she glared at Duskcloud, wanting him to do something about it. However, the sensible tom nodded in agreement to Frostwind.

"She's right, it'll help train up Hickorypaw," he said reassuringly to Shimmerpelt, but the silver she-cat still stared unhappily at her daughter's mentor.

"She'll be fine," Frostwind implored.

Groaning, Shimmerpelt trudged away back to Hickorypaw and asked her if she was alright. She ended up sharing prey with her daughter before she turned in for the night. The edges of Frostwind's mouth curved slightly upwards as she caught sight of Skyfeather entering the camp, prey in his mouth. She'd been waiting for him to come back before she ate, but she'd been beginning to lose her patience.

"That's where you are," she said with raised eyebrows.

He stared at her with feigned shock. "That's where I am? Have I been gone for moons, O Great Leader?"

Frostwind giggled and opened her mouth to respond, but then-

"ARE YOU CALLING ANOTHER CAT CLAN LEADER? DO YOU NOT RESPECT ME AT ALL?" Stonestar came bursting there, his jaws wide.

"Ew, you've got cavities," Frostwind said. That only earned her an extra glare but he was mainly focusing on Skyfeather.

"She's my BODYGUARD. Not you LEADER! Insolent cat!" Stonestar snarled and unsheathed his claws.

"WHOA!" Skyfeather backed away. "It was TEASING, Stonestar, teasing! I didn't mean it!"

"It wasn't teasing, was it, Frostwind?" Stonestar asked without looking at her.

"It was," Frostwind said in a bored voice.

Stonestar glared at her. "You're supposed to support me!"

"I think I'd choose my mate over you, thank you very much," Frostwind said flatly.

Stunned into silence, Stonestar walked away, zigzagging across the camp towards his den.

Skyfeather moved in closer. "You referred to me as your mate," he

said. "I didn't realize we'd gotten down to that yet?"

Frostwind stared at him in amusement. "Well, someone had to hurry you up."

**Word count: 2167**

**An update not following my regular update schedule? I don't know whether to say yay or to say... Idk. There's no school today so that's probably why.**

# Chapter Twenty-one

"The earlier attack went badly, but I'm willing to try again," Stonestar declared boldly. "Who's with me?"

There was a soft murmuring from the surrounding cats, and most of them were shaking their heads at his bold announcement. None of them wanted war and their so-called smart Clan leader was practically forcing it upon them.

"I don't think anyone wants it," Hawkfeather informed Stonestar coldly. "Perhaps you should drop the idea. Your deputy almost died. Maybe you should think about that. And we're still not sure if Ashspots is going to make it. Do you have any idea how much trouble you've caused? We've also just found out Brightflame is expecting kits. We don't want their father to die, and Dewfrost is one of the few remaining cats left."

Stonestar glared down at his medicine cat but seemed to be unable to find anything to say. Frostwind sighed in relief. Battles were where she shone, but that didn't mean she liked them. The way she'd just murdered everyone the previous night scared her, and she didn't want to do it again, although the way things were, she'd be forced into it one way or another. She ignored her apprentice, who was running in circles around her. Seriously, she thought she'd exhausted that pesky kit. But turned out after two hours of napping she was up and ready to go again. Frostwind still had energy but she wasn't going to waste it on her dumb apprentice. She wanted to rest a little. The previous night's events had been tiring and she'd been woken up at dawn right away. She stifled a yawn, not wanting to seem disrespectful to her Clan leader before stopping and wondering whether she cared at all.

"I think someone should have a say in this," Honeyleaf argued. "Someone who will undoubtedly be doing most of the fighting. Frostwind?"

Frostwind looked up, blinking the tiredness out of her eyes.

Shimmerpelt shooed Hickorypaw away, giving Frostwind some space to think.

"I don't think there's a need to," Frostwind said finally. "They trashed our battle party but they're all dead except for Mousestar and maybe Turtleleaf. I don't think there's a point wasting our efforts right now, they're hardly a problem at the moment."

Stonestar narrowed his eyes. "If you say so. Honeyleaf, it seems you are itching to say something else."

"I want Cloudbeam to become a medicine cat," Honeyleaf stated matter-of-factly.

Cloudbeam immediately moved protectively over his mate and his three kits. Twilightmoon looked at Honeyleaf with a horrified expression, and their three kits, Redkit, Talonkit and Flamekit, all stared at Honeyleaf through narrowed slits for eyes. They weren't pleased with the prospect of their father not being allowed to care for them, and their mother clearly felt the same.

"He doesn't want to be one," Twilightmoon protested. "We've gone over this, Honeyleaf! He wants to be a father to them. He's waited so long to have a real family." She twined tails with her mate, but these words struck something in Frostwind.

Cloudbeam had been waiting for a very long time to have a real family?

That meant he didn't count Windecho as his real brother or real family either, like her. Which meant that all that time she'd avoided him so he could spend time with his brother had been wasted. He'd been on the lookout for real, caring family, and she'd basically turned him down time and time again. She didn't have anything to say at that point, though, so she remained silent, crossing her paws in front of her and letting Twilightmoon yammer away.

"I had a prophecy about him!" Honeyleaf protested furiously. "White cat with blue eyes! Okay? You think I'm lying, do you? NO! I genuinely want him to have a nice family but maybe THAT'S NOT HIS DESTINY! MAYBE HIS DESTINY IS TO BE A MEDICINE CAT!"

Frostwind cut in. "You've been wrong before, and you could be wrong again. Let cats choose their own destinies."

Honeyleaf turned her smoking eyes on Frostwind but said nothing, her mouth trembling. "If that's so," she snarled. "Don't you have anything to say about this, Stonestar?"

Stonestar eyed her casually for a few moments before asking, "Have you ever considered retiring, Honeyleaf?"

Frostwind couldn't stall the gasp that came from her, and she was not the only one. Stonestar had basically suggested that Honeyleaf was going gaga with her prophecies and should retire, letting Hawkfeather take over! She wasn't the nicest cat, but who said that to anybody? It was a flat-out insult and he'd said it anyway! The tiniest sliver of respect she'd held for him, which was mainly because of his boldness, evaporated on the spot, and Frostwind glared at him with steely eyes. She wasn't fond of Honeyleaf but she didn't hate her either, and Honeyleaf did what she felt was right for the Clan. She'd never had any bad intentions.

Honeyleaf was trembling from head to claws. "If you think I'm speaking mumbo jumbo, go ahead and think that way!" the golden-furred medicine cat fumed. "Other cats know to appreciate skill and talent!" She whipped around, turning to glare at Frostwind and opened her mouth to speak but Frostwind cut her off.

"I do not think you are speaking nonsense," Frostwind declared openly. "I just don't want you flaunting destiny in their faces. Not in my face, not in my brother's, not in anybody's. You had this prophecy of a white cat with blue eyes after his birth, so it probably isn't him. Please don't bother Cloudbeam anymore," she pleaded.

Honeyleaf considered this for a few moments before finally nodding. "Fine," she growled. "But I hold no more respect for you," she shot at her Clan leader. "I regret the day I helped Lightpelt kit you."

Lightpelt gave a soft gasp from in the crowd, and her other surviving kit, Shimmerpelt, moved over to support her mother. She narrowed her eyes at Honeyleaf, but she knew the insult wasn't

targeted at Lightpelt.

"Frostwind," Stonestar hissed softly, "Kill."

***

*Did he say kill?* Frostwind wondered. Cats were yowling indignantly from all around her and she stared petrified at her Clan leader, her entire body shaking. Kill? Her Clan leader, who was supposed to protect and help his Clanmates, had ordered her to kill their loyal medicine cat? She stared at the golden-furred she-cat and noticed she was shaking. Honeyleaf was afraid of her.

Frostwind stared him in the eye. "I refuse!" she shouted.

The surrounding cats gasped, but she was also given looks of approval. Many had thought of her as Stonestar's pawn, and she was finally proving them wrong. A look of pride spread across her face as she faced her Clan leader with defiance in her eyes. He stared down at her with disappointment.

"I knew you were turning into this," he said, shaking his head. "You're a monster. You have no life, and now you can't even follow orders."

Frostwind froze.

"I-I'm not," she choked, but the words had no meaning and she stared up at him, not daring to say a word.

"Your words are so weak. You can't even deny it," he sneered. "Can you?"

"I... I..."

***

*"Hey, Frostkit! Come play with me!"*

*"Sure thing, Stormkit!"*

*Frostkit hopped along the grassy patch to meet her best friend, her eyes*

*lighting up with pleasure.*

*"Have you ever thought of your future?" the older kit asked her in a very matured voice. Frostkit grinned and she saw Stormkit do the same.*

*"Getting old, are you?" the white she-kit sniggered. Stormkit cuffed her ear playfully.*

*"No, I'm not! I'm thinking about my future. I'm being insightful," Stormkit promised. "So, what do you want to be? A warrior or a medicine cat?"*

*"A warrior of course! Medicine cats are boring. Important, but boring," Frostkit grumbled.*

*Stormkit laughed, the sound like the tinkling of tiny bells. "You and I think alike! Ha!"*

*Frostkit grinned at Stormkit, feeling all worry evaporate on the spot. Stormkit was leaving soon to become an apprentice. Did it ever have to end? She stared at her best friend, wanting nothing more to play with her forever and never grow up.*

*"So, why do you want to be a warrior?" Stormkit asked curiously.*

*Frostkit frowned. Why was Stormkit being so nosy? Of course, she couldn't keep anything from her best friend. "I don't know. I mean, medicine cats are important too but I don't want to be stuck in the medicine den all day. I want to help the Clan, you know? Hunt for them, feed the kits and elders, and protect them!"*

*"You know you may have to kill sometimes to protect, right?" Stormkit asked softly.*

*"Nah. I'll avoid killing. It isn't in the warrior code! I'll let them surrender. I'll be the great... um..."*

*"Frostmouse?" Stormkit suggested with a grin.*

*Frostkit gave her a flat look. "Not that again. I'll be the great Froststorm, and everyone will fear me! They'll run at the very sight of me, then I won't have to kill anybody."*

*"But to get that kind of reputation, you need to be scary," Stormkit pressed. "Maybe it's best to become a medicine cat. You avoid the battles, and-"*

*"You're just trying to keep me safe," Frostkit accused. Stormkit giggled.*

*"Okay, I am. But promise me, you aren't going to kill anybody."*

*Frostkit grinned. "I promise. Why would I kill anybody, anyway?"*

***

It all flashed back in that moment, that day from when she was a kit, where she'd promised her sworn sister she wouldn't kill anybody. She'd forgotten that promise. It was layered underneath many other shattered promises. She'd made a similar promise to her mate, and she'd failed to uphold it. Now she was the monster she'd become, and she had to put up with it.

"Fine." Her voice collapsed. "I'm a monster like you say. But I don't want to be one."

"If you don't want to be one," Stonestar said, his voice softening, "you have to start by following orders, and mending the bonds you broke. I'm willing to trust you again and let you stay my bodyguard, but you have to complete the task for me. Kill her."

*So I didn't hear him wrong!* Frostwind thought furiously. "No," she said. "The way to mend bonds is not to kill more cats. I don't want to kill anybody else but I'll do it if it's inevitable." She gave Stonestar a glare. "And if that necessary cat to kill is you, be reminded that I will show no mercy."

"Haven't I only given you kindness and graciousness, Frostwind?" Stonestar asked. "I gave you a position when nobody dared to trust you. Aren't you a little grateful at all?"

"No." Skyfeather stepped up. "That's untrue. I trusted her. I never stopped."

All around him, Frostwind's Clanmates stood up. "We didn't trust her before," Shimmerpelt announced. "I didn't think I could after all

she'd done. I thought she couldn't make the right decisions anymore and she was just your dangerous pawn. But I was wrong. She can make the right choices at the right times, and she's done it here. I trust her more than ever."

"You saw what she did to your daughter!" Stonestar choked, unable to stand being roasted by his sister. "Hickorypaw fainted!"

"She did not, she was merely exhausted is all," Shimmerpelt stated coldly. "She was fine after a few hours of sleep. You, I put up with. I thought you'd change back to my lovely brother, the perfect candidate for Clan leader. But you haven't changed. You need to be that Stoneclaw that Sunstar wanted for her deputy, but you can't be him anymore. Too much has changed. Is it the responsibility that changed you? I don't know. Maybe it's the stress. Maybe you could never handle the leadership at all."

"I can handle the leadership! I am a great leader!" Stonestar shouted.

"... Stoneclaw?" Hawkfeather asked gingerly. "I think it's time for you to tell everyone what happened at the Moonstone."

***

"I was given only one extra life, and I lost it in the AutumnClan battle. StarClan said I wasn't ready, but I had to last for a little while, because the Clan would break apart without a leader. The rightful leader was Silverlight and she went berserk when it didn't become her. That's when our ancestors realized that Silverlight was the wrong choice and Sunshine had always been fit for it. Sunstar became leader earlier on than that but she died during the civil war, a victim to Silverlight. Then, StarClan crowned me Clan leader with bitterness in their hearts.

"They didn't want me to be Clan leader, but they made it so. They said the right cat was Amberfrost. They told me that, told me flat-out because they didn't want me to bring destruction to the Clan. But here I went and almost got her killed. They never told me a second choice if Amberfrost died, and I got carried away with the prospect of being leader. I never told anyone, and I had the

medicine cats keep the secret.

"Tonight... oh, StarClan save me. Honeyleaf spoke against me, so I had to quieten her before she told everyone the truth. She's been threatening to. And I didn't know what else to do."

"Oh, Stonestar," Frostwind sighed, and that was all she could say.

**Word count: 2166**

**I don't know if that was boring. I may need a few filler chapters because the action MAYYYY be coming up soon. The real action. Hehe. I have big plans. It's drawing to an end... kind of.**

# Chapter Twenty-two

Honeyleaf died after a few moons as an elder. She hadn't wanted that role, but Stonestar had forced it upon her. Hawkfeather had offered to let her help him, but she'd always replied, if Stonestar valued his medicine cats, he wouldn't have dismissed her. And what answer could Hawkfeather give to that?

Meanwhile, Frostwind and Skyfeather had finally agreed that they were ready to have kits. Frostwind wasn't sure if she would be a good mother, but Skyfeather had begged and pleaded with her, and Frostwind wanted his happiness more than anything. She agreed, albeit reluctantly, and they both awaited the day when she would know if she had kits.

The only problem was Stonestar didn't want her to have kits. Since a few moons had passed, Hickorypaw would be fully trained by the time Frostwind needed to move into the nursery. Hickorypaw had shaped up well with Frostwind's training. Surprisingly, her brothers had done so too, even under Cloudbeam and Windecho.

Stonestar came up to Frostwind for the umpteenth time, his irritation showing. "Look, no kits for you. I need a stable bodyguard, and I don't need a mother. I already have one, and I want you focused on your duties."

"What about what I want?" Frostwind asked softly. "What if kits are what I desire?"

"I know you don't want them," Stonestar said huffily. "It's Skyfeather, isn't it? Maybe he should go."

Frostwind stared, affronted. By now, she knew that go meant die. He was going to kill Skyfeather because of their decision to have kits? Well, the answer was no, and she spat the word in his face, leaving him groping at his face as she stormed away.

"Hey, Frostwind! I'm done with the elders' ticks, and changing their

moss, and bringing them prey!" Hickorypaw bounded over gleefully. Despite their starting anger at each other, Frostwind and Hickorypaw had grown quite close. Frostwind never forgot that Hickorypaw was Stonestar's niece, though, and it was hard to be extremely kind to her when she had a psychopath for an uncle.

"Good job! Did I promise you something?" Frostwind asked casually when Hickorypaw gave her a sly grin.

"Yeah, you did. Hunting, remember?"

Right. Why had she forgotten? She'd been promising to take Hickorypaw hunting all week, but it had been raining and raining. It was autumn and slippery drenched leaves on the ground didn't help with hunting. Hickorypaw had slipped on several occasions. Her brother Smallpaw had sprained his ankle recently. His warrior ceremony was pushed back, and the tom was anything but happy. Still, he never argued, and stayed in the medicine den under Hawkfeather's watchful eye without complaint. The Clan was still morning Honeyleaf, and Frostwind had to admit, she missed the grumpy golden she-cat. She could be annoying at times, but she had her heart in the right place. At least now nobody was pressuring Cloudbeam to become a medicine cat; he had even become jittery around Hawkfeather, who had never once mentioned the idea.

Windecho and Cloudbeam had been growing apart for a while. Cloudbeam mainly locked onto Twilightmoon nowadays, and Frostwind was glad for him. Being away from Windecho's negative influence might do her kindhearted brother some good. She knew why he'd mated with Twilightmoon; Cloudbeam was a softie at heart and he needed true love in his life, didn't he. And of course that true love had to be a she-cat about twice his age. But Frostwind hadn't meowed a word, since that might offend him. She was on thin ice already.

But today was the apprentice ceremony for Cloudbeam's kits after a while of waiting. "I'll take you hunting later, Hicky," Frostwind meowed casually. Her apprentice glared daggers at her.

"What did I tell you about Hicky?" the brown she-cat grumbled unhappily.

"I wasn't paying attention, did you tell me anything?" Frostwind said indifferently. Hickorypaw pouted but she had long given up on telling Frostwind to stop calling her names.

"Redkit, Talonkit and Flamekit, you have reached the age to be apprenticed," Stonestar announced levelly. The three kits lined up excitedly and their parents looked on, their kits' excitement reflected in their eyes. "From this moment onwards, your names will be Redpaw, Talonpaw and Flamepaw.

"Redpaw has requested to walk the path of a medicine cat, thus her mentor will be Honey- er, Hawkfeather. Hawkfeather, you received excellent training from Honeyleaf, and I expect you to pass those skills down to Redpaw."

Hawkfeather was smiling warmly at Redpaw but the glare he shot at Stonestar was anything but friendly. Frostwind hid her devilish grin and turned to Skyfeather.

"Who will get Talonpaw and Flamepaw, do you think?" she asked lightly. Her mate's eyes twinkled.

"I don't know, you'll see," he said confidently, but he was moving towards Stonestar and Talonpaw and Frostwind realized he had been selected as a mentor! She was happy for him, of course. Had he had an apprentice before, other than her, the badly behaved chump? She suppressed a laugh.

"Talonpaw, your mentor will be Skyfeather. Skyfeather, um, one of our warriors trained you well and I trust you will pass down all those skills to Talonpaw," Stonestar said uncertainly. Frostwind almost burst out laughing. Stonestar and Skyfeather were cousins, and he couldn't even remember Skyfeather's mentor's name? Not that Frostwind knew, but that wasn't a very important thing anyway.

Skyfeather and Talonpaw touched noses. Frostwind beamed at her mate but he didn't see her past his new apprentice's glossy gray fur. Talonpaw pranced in a circle, happy for himself.

"Lastly Flamepaw, your mentor will be myself," Stonestar

announced.

Cloudbeam and Twilightmoon instantly looked at each other, unhappy with this choice. "Er, Stonestar, could you, um, choose another mentor?" Cloudbeam spoke up. "We think you'd be a bit busy with Clan matters and won't pay much attention to Flamepaw, he's a great cat and he needs a real mentor."

"I am a real mentor. Sit down, Cloudbeam. And you, Twilightmoon, stop huffing. And Shimmerpelt, my own sister, why are you doing that?" Stonestar said, annoyed.

Everyone turned to look at Shimmerpelt. On the ground, she had written:

HERE LIES FLAMEPAW, A BRAVE APPRENTICE WHO WAS UNFORTUNATELY APPRENTICED TO STONESTAR AND DIDN'T SURVIVE HIS FIRST DAY.

"What?" Shimmerpelt asked. "I thought it might come in handy. Oh, wait, hang on."

ALSO, EVERYONE OBJECTED TO THIS ARRANGEMENT, BUT STONESTAR WAS ADAMANT, AND THUS, FLAMEPAW WAS SADLY KILLED DURING AN ACCIDENT.

Even Flamepaw burst out laughing and it was about his death. Stonestar glared all around.

"Frostwind, back me," he snapped.

"Continue," Frostwind gestured to Shimmerpelt.

THE POOR CHILD DIED A HERO, FIGHTING EVIL AND TRYING TO FREE HIS CLAN FROM A CAT SENT FROM THE DARK FOREST'S REIGN. FLAMEPAW WILL BE RESPECTED BY ALL. BUT LET IT BE KNOWN THAT WE ATTEMPTED TO HAVE HIS MENTOR CHANGED AND FAILED.

"Done," Shimmerpelt said proudly. "Your grave, Flamepaw."

"Um. What?" Flamepaw said.

The rest of the Clan burst out laughing, only leaving out Stonestar. "That isn't funny and you don't find it funny, do you, Flamepaw?" Stonestar asked. Flamepaw shook his head and the Clan leader glared triumphantly around at his Clan. "See! It isn't funny!"

"OH, WAIT, IT'S A JOKE," Flamepaw said, realization dawning in his eyes.

Then he burst out laughing too.

Stonestar's eyes flashed with impatience and Frostwind could hardly contain her giggles. She'd only done so because she'd wanted to keep on his good books, but then wondered what was the point and let out a loud squeal of laughter. Nobody looked at her because everyone was laughing their heads off too.

"I. WANT. SILENCE! FROM. YOU. OR. ELSE. I. WILL. EXILE. ALL OF YOU!" Stonestar bellowed.

The Clan became an eerie quiet, and some cats turned ghostly pale. "Can he really do that?" Duskcloud asked. "Exile a whole bunch of us?"

"I'M CLAN LEADER AND I CAN DO WHAT I WANT! ARE THERE ANY MORE ARGUMENTS ABOUT FLAMEPAW'S MENTOR?" Stonestar shouted.

Twilightmoon stepped forward. "Yes, there are. I object. Flamepaw doesn't feel safe with you, and if you feel any offense take it. He won't be able to train properly under you so he won't be a full warrior and all of that nonsense! I think it's safer if he gets another mentor."

"OOOOHHHHH, painful insult!" said Hairypaw with glee.

All eyes turned to him and the hairy apprentice flushed, but he didn't apologize. His Clan leader's eyes were boring into him but he seemed adamant. "What, I made a comment, is talking wrong now?" Hairypaw asked rebelliously. Stonestar's eyes flashed.

"No hunting for you for a week, and you'll only eat one meal a day," Stonestar declared.

"WHAT?" Shimmerpelt and Duskcloud rushed protectively to Hairypaw. "He'll starve!"

"He'll last a week. Winter is worse. Yes, that's his punishment."

"But it's autumn! If he doesn't get fat now, he'll never survive winter!" Shimmerpelt protested indignantly. "Stonestar, I've tried to be quiet to you but this is going too far!"

"You're tried to be quiet to me? Then what about the grave?"

"It was a joke okay!" Shimmerpelt said evasively. "But starving my son is no joke!" She glared daggers at him with her eyes icy cold. "You're no brother of mine. My brother died moons ago."

"I'm still alive," Stonestar croaked.

"No," Shimmerpelt said, "I know you're alive, but my brother was Shadowflight, Frostwind's father."

Frostwind frowned. She'd completely forgotten that she and Shimmerpelt were kin through Shadowflight. She grinned sheepishly when Stonestar's eyes flashed over her, but for once, the leader had nothing mean to say, and he stared blankly at his sister. Frostwind smiled faintly. She remembered this exact situation, when she and her brothers had had their falling-out. They hadn't made amends since, but they still had each other.

The Clan dispersed to do various other things. Frostwind frowned, realizing that Skyfeather had gone to lead a hunting patrol without her. She'd hoped to bring Hickorypaw on a patrol with the most amazing tom in the world, but she also didn't want Hickorypaw starting a love life.

"So, we're hunting, right?" Hickorypaw prodded Frostwind.

Frostwind blinked her eyes open. Had she been daydreaming or what? "Oh, right, sorry," she said drowsily. "Right, let's head off now."

She was overcome with fatigue, but she made it through the entire hunt, even making some spectacular catches, thanks to her amazing

stamina reserves. She'd had a lot of time to practice and build up her stamina; if stamina was water, she had a well.

"Hey, are you alright? You seem kind of tired," Hickorypaw meowed, concerned. She was the worrying type, just like her mother, Shimmerpelt. Frostwind smiled faintly.

"No, I'm okay. It's been a long week," Frostwind said, although she knew exactly what was causing the problem. She didn't want to worry Hickorypaw extra, though; her apprentice deserved a good mentor and not an absent one. "Although I daresay you may hear a patter of tiny paws soon."

Hickorypaw frowned in confusion and Frostwind stifled her laughter. Young cats never did seem to understand subtlety, did they, and Frostwind was a young cat herself. Skyfeather wasn't the youngest but he was a youth at heart with his sunny personality.

Hickorypaw never figured out what Frostwind's words meant and Frostwind saw her approach Shimmerpelt later on. What a silly kit. Frostwind thought she'd educated Hickorypaw a little on basic life lessons, but clearly the brown apprentice was a slow learner! She purred in amusement but made her way to the medicine den to be absolutely sure.

Hawkfeather was poring over his herbs but when he looked up, his eyes were bright for the first time since Honeyleaf's death. "Hey, can I help you?" he asked cheerfully, before adding darkly, "Please tell me it isn't another war."

Frostwind laughed. "No, quite the opposite." She felt strangely lighthearted, like she didn't have a care in the world. She hadn't felt this way in a long time, but it was a freeing feeling and she purred blissfully. "I was wondering about something else, actually." She waited for the effect.

Hawkfeather wasn't giving it to her. "Oh, I see what you mean," he said flatly. "You think you're expecting?" Frostwind nodded, just a tiny movement of her head.

"I might be," she clarified. "I'm suddenly more tired and it's odd,

really. But it's great too. Am I?"

Hawkfeather sighed in relief and Frostwind gave him a quizzical look. "You're not one of those queens," he sighed appreciatively. "You should have seen either Shimmerpelt or Twilightmoon! They rambled and rambled and didn't let me tell them anything! And there was Dawnfire, too, but she never ended up expecting. Silly dolts. They rambled on about having kits and they never did let me clarify with them."

"Dawnfire was here?" Frostwind asked, interested.

"Yeah, she was. Dunno who she thought she mated with, it certainly isn't any of the toms around here, but you know Dawnfire. She goofs a bit."

Frostwind purred in amusement. Then she recalled something. "Hey, you're Amberfrost's sister, right?"

Hawkfeather stiffened and shot her a glare. "I'm her brother, yes."

Frostwind flushed. "Oops! Sorry, it just slipped out. So, um, how's Amberfrost? I've noticed she and Stonestar have been fighting less lately."

Hawkfeather gave her a weird look, then had a look of dawning realization. "You don't know," he said, and he almost looked disbelieving.

"Know what?"

Hawkfeather looked around. "Come deeper into my den, Frostwind."

She obliged and entered.

"Amberfrost's planning a rebellion against Stonestar."

"Another civil war? Hawkfeather, this is ridiculous."

Hawkfeather glared at her. "I did mark you out as a Stonestar lover."

"Excuse me?" Frostwind flared up. "I do not support Stonestar! But you saw the mess with Sunstar," she added imploringly.

Hawkfeather shook his head. "The plan is set. We strike in four moons." He gave her an odd look. "Your kits will be born by then, by the way."

"Oh!" Frostwind said. Her mouth hung open. "Oh, I... I guess they will, won't they?"

"I just told you so."

"Does Skyfeather know about this plan?" Frostwind asked.

"Amberfrost should have told him on the hunting patrol. Nobody supports Stonestar, so this should be a breeze," Hawkfeather said coolly.

"Don't take it so lightly," Frostwind chided.

"Why? You won't be standing beside him, will you?"

"Haven't I spoke out against him at every single Clan meeting?" Frostwind demanded, feeling irritated.

Hawkfeather nodded. "So you did. So you did."

Word count: 2319

A/N

Did this on my ipad so there's no bolding I'm sorry. Here's your chapter, hope you like it!!

# Chapter Twenty-three

Frostwind was left troubled after hearing about Amberfrost's plan. She knew all along that the bubbly fire orange she-cat was not an avid supporter of Stonestar, but they had seen the tragic battle against Sunstar when Silverlight had rebelled. Frostwind wasn't keen on going through that again.

She surprisingly found herself in the company of Lightningstrike, who was the former mate of Silverlight. "I retired a while back," he announced.

Frostwind gave him a look. "I thought you died a while back."

"I never die," Lightningstrike meowed automatically. "Although sometimes I wish I could. You know my mate was... But you do, of course. You were there. Just a wee little kitty."

Frostwind stuck out her tongue. "I don't have the memory of a goldfish, okay. Yes I was there. I know your mate is Silverlight."

"She was perfect, you know. A brilliant mother and mate. I don't know though... She went a little crazy towards the end. She was obsessed with becoming leader after she was deputy. She sustained a light injury to the head, so she had a second litter to take up that time that she couldn't do anything taxing to her body. I'm pretty sure kitting was taxing but the medicine cats didn't think so so that's what she did. She loved them, she really did, and it was Blossomleaf dying that set her off. She went into a rampage and almost killed Honeyleaf if you remember."

"If I remember?" Frostwind said, outraged. "I was there! I saw it with my own two eyes!" Her anger ebbed away, leaving regret. "I'm sorry I said that," she mumbled.

Lightningstrike grinned. "Mood swings," he noted. "The rumors are true, aren't they? We are going to hear some pattering of tiny paws

soon?"

"Only elders say these things! Retire!" Frostwind yelped. The last thing she needed was Lightningstrike spreading false rumors about her around the Clan. Not that they were false, but... Just in case they were.

Lightningstrike laughed good-naturedly and he walked away, surprisingly to the elders' den. She looked a little shocked and he noticed.

"I am an elder," he said with a choked laugh. "I retired not that long after Silverlight went berserk, didn't you know?"

Frostwind blushed bashfully. Was she that unaware with things that went on in the Clan? "If you recall, I thought you died," she pointed out mildly.

"Oh, how nice. You must pass me every day," Lightningstrike meowed teasingly.

"Hey! I've got other things on my mind!" Frostwind protested.

Lightningstrike laughed again. "Of course you do. You don't have time for an old elder like me."

Frostwind flushed. "It's not that! It's..." She paused, because it was exactly that.

"It's fine. Even my own kits have no time for me anymore. Some of them are dead too. Riverfall, Mistypool, Stormwind, Blossomleaf... Ironically, all of my daughters," Lightningstrike meowed, although his tone wasn't jovial. "Your kits are going to be my grandchildren, you know. They're my kin."

"Oh!" Frostwind had almost forgotten that Lightningstrike was Skyfeather's father! "Oh, right!" Why was she so forgetful nowadays? The kits, she thought wryly.

"I'll see them when they come, and you'll see me around," Lightningstrike winked. "I've fathered many, but yours will be my first. I caught Mistypool flirting with Yellowtail a lot, but then they

both died. Alas, the pity." He sighed. "We haven't many cats around nowadays. New kits are always a blessing, though. Maybe that Hickorypaw might mentor one of them."

"She'll be a warrior then," Frostwind mused. Yes, she would like Hickorypaw to mentor one of her kits. Surely Stonestar would see that his kin got apprentices.

Lightningstrike gave her a swift nod. "Well, until we meet again," he said, his eyes twinkling as he withdrew.

***

The next two moons passed uneventfully until today. Frostwind was moving into the nursery, her morning sickness having finally caught up to her, and Hickorypaw and her siblings were becoming warriors, which had, along with Skyfeather's urging, been the real reason why Frostwind had decided to move to the nursery. The kits were due in roughly a moon, so she would still patrol a little.

"So. Right. Hickory and Hairy and Small," Stonestar said thoughtfully. Everyone gawked at him. Flamepaw, who was the leader's apprentice after much arguing, watched on, while his brother and sister grinned. They looked forward to their ceremonies too, although those would be a little later.

"Um. Flamepaw, give me a name," Stonestar meowed.

The entire Clan was still gawping rudely at him.

"Hairypelt?" Flamepaw suggested. "Ah, yes, Hairypelt!" Stonestar announced delightedly. "Your new name," he added to the panic-stricken Hairypaw, who suddenly became Hairypelt.

"It's so unoriginal," the hairy tom said, disgusted.

Stonestar ignored him. "Another name for Smallpaw, if you would please, Flamepaw."

Flamepaw looked to his parents and, strangely, to Frostwind. Frostwind knew that Stonestar would come up with a horrible name otherwise and meowed, "Perhaps Smallsky for Smallpaw, and

Hickoryfeather for Hickorypaw."

"Smallsky," Stonestar mused, nodding. "But Hickoryfeather won't do, no, it won't do. Smallsky! That's your name."

"But the ceremony!" Smallsky gawked.

"And... Hickorysnarl," Stonestar said delightedly. The newly named Hickorysnarl stared dumbfounded at Stonestar, who'd given her the most awful name ever!

Frostwind stared dumbfounded but couldn't find anything appropriate to say. She'd stopped challenging Stonestar all the time when she had started visibly expecting kits, because she knew that she was no danger to him anymore and he knew it. But seeing Hickorysnarl so downcast...

"Maybe you shouldn't make that her name." Surprisingly, it was timid Smallsky who spoke up. Hairypelt also stepped forward. "My name isn't that good," Hairypelt meowed defiantly, "but it isn't as bad as Hickorysnarl."

Frostwind shuddered, spiking pain in her belly. She wondered if the kits where actually more pain than they were worth. But the pain came, again and again, and she realized it was no cramp this time. But... They weren't due for a moon! Her sight became spotted and she could barely make out Skyfeather and Hickorysnarl kneeling over her.

She cleared her mind. Pain she could deal with. Pain was no stranger.

She could vaguely make out Skyfeather calling for Hawkfeather, and then she was in the nursery, and her vision was spotted again, and she was filled with excruciating pain-

The world was ending. Her life was ending. And then in the fog, someone kept whispering push, push, push what, she wondered, why push? She could see yellow, the stars were calling for her, perhaps it was finally time for the tragedy called life to end.

But... Did she want to go? One of those voices, its speaker hidden

by the fog, was Skyfeather, and he was calling her name. He wanted her, but nobody had ever wanted her her whole life. For the first time, she pictured Skyfeather being a fraud, deserting her the moment life gave her troubles.

If she couldn't trust him, she couldn't trust anyone. And somehow, in the moment when their love should have been deepest, she felt she was sliding away from him. Her love, deep as it was, was turning dark and bitter, and she wasn't sure she wanted the kits anymore, wasn't sure if she wanted to bear them for a fraud.

Wasn't sure if she wanted to live anymore.

She slumped even as she braced the pain, wondering if it was worth it to drop dead on the ground and never see the sparks of life again. She'd killed so many, and she didn't know if she'd done enough to redeem herself yet. Would she end up in the Dark Forest? Who was she leaving behind, anyway? If Skyfeather was a fraud, then she had nobody. Hickorysnarl had siblings, besides, she was probably too busy despising her new name to care about her mentor dying.

Frostwind knew they weren't heartless cats but life seemed to be drawing to an end. A final end to all the pain and suffering, the death, the gore. The triumph over enemies, never to be experienced again, and that was a good thing. She'd either live once more as a happy StarClan cat or be banished to the Dark Forest forever.

But she wasn't ready for that. Monster as she was, she didn't want to live eternally remembered as a murderer. She had time to redeem herself to StarClan, didn't she?

But maybe the time was not enough. Maybe it was done, she was done, done living, done caring.

Done being ashamed.

Her grip on life grew lax, because she knew it wasn't what she needed anymore. Perhaps death was yet the next pathway to an adventure.

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She didn't remember dying. She remembered clinging on to bare hope and realizing it was fragile. But she woke in a lush green forest and almost sighed in relief. She had made it to StarClan after all. Maybe she'd done enough good in the end, enough good for redemption.

A cat approached her, purple eyes filled with love, and Frostwind recognized her mother immediately. Hopeheart looked ageless, her fur sleek and shiny. She was different from the Hopeheart she remembered, because though her name was Hopeheart, Hopeheart had been one without hope, one clinging on to Shadowflight for life at all.

And he was there too. Shadowflight, walking with tails entwined with Hopeheart, and Frostwind's heart beat fast with warmth and longing, seeing her parents in their state of happiness, and herself, weak but determined.

"You are ready to leave everything behind to join the ranks of StarClan?" Hopeheart asked, her voice mild but cold and firm. "You leave behind Skyfeather, Hickorysnarl, Windecho - I know you love him a little - Cloudbeam, and your kits. You could make it, Frostwind."

"But it's your choice," Shadowflight meowed.

"Your choice," Hopeheart echoed.

"But what if there's no point! What if you've tried and tried again and life is done with you and you don't care anymore!" Frostwind cried, furious tears leaking it from her eyes and she was enraged. "StarClan expects so much of me, it wants me to save my Clan and what? Who relies on a murderer, Hopeheart, who?"

"I would," Hopeheart meowed softly. "I put my faith in you, Frostwind, my hope, and I hope I'm not hoping in vain. You have a future, darling, a future one to behold, but you can't throw it away now."

"A future to behold. This is nonsense. Where is StarClan so I can die!" Frostwind shouted.

"You have a destiny, Frostwind, my daughter, and it has not yet been fulfilled. Go forth and fulfil your destiny," Hopeheart whispered, her voice carrying with the wind. "You only have one chance."

"What if I don't want that chance?" Frostwind asked miserably.

"Would you forfeit the chance to know your daughter? She is already the only one of her litter," Hopeheart pressed.

"She's been born?" Frostwind asked, surprised.

Hopeheart laughed. "You think you've been in pain and pushing all this time and nothing happened?"

Frostwind nodded sheepishly.

"Well, there were two stillborns," Hopeheart meowed a little sadly. "Skyfeather has named them already. You birthed all she-cats. The stillborns are Hollykit and Gleamkit." Hollykit and Gleamkit. Excellent names, but sad that they had to be stillborn.

"I'll go back," Frostwind said finally.

Hopeheart beamed. "I thought you'd say that, nice!"

Frostwind gave her a look. "How do I go back?"

"Jump right through this pool here and you shall emerge on the other side."

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Her eyes blinked open, her ears perked. Her muscles ached but that was normal. She was used to the aching of muscles, having been victim to her own intensive training. Her vision was blurry at first, but soon cleared, and she saw rows of herbs, which were vaguely familiar. The medicine den, she realized, and chided herself for not realizing earlier. She smelled chamomile, what was that for again?

Strength, medicine cat training whispered in her head and she nodded dizzily to herself, the actual nod a millimeter of movement

of her head. She yawned and stretched, imagining Hawkfeather running over and dousing her in herbs.

He wasn't there, though, and the medicine den was eerily quiet.

She realized she wasn't alone. A tiny, gorgeous she-kit mewled at her belly, tiny paws pawing her. Frostwind was filled with love as she gazed down at the tiny scrap of fur, so helpless. She was white like Frostwind, with gray paws. She was perfect.

Frostwind recalled with sadness this little one's littermates. Hollykit and Gleamkit, they were called. She wondered what they had looked like. Would she see the burial, or were they already buried already?

She got up and the tiny she-kit flailed at her paws, forcing Frostwind to lie down again out of sympathy.

"You don't have a name, do you?" Frostwind mused.

The she-kit yawned, revealing a toothless mouth. "Right," Frostwind murmured. "Kits don't have teeth. Great StarClan, how did I have kits and forget that? You know," she went on, talking regardless of whether her daughter could understand her or not, "Cloudkit would be a perfect name for you, but of course you can't be Cloudkit, there's already a Cloudbeam."

The kit closed her mouth and fell asleep.

"Kits," Frostwind muttered with jealousy. "Sleep comes so easily to them. I'd have to discuss names with Skyfeather though. But maybe Pebblekit." Pebblekit sounded right, she thought.

Right on cue, Skyfeather burst in, blue eyes worried, but they fell on Frostwind, awake and alright, and softened with relief. "You're alright. I thought I'd lost you."

"You'll never lose me. I don't die easy," Frostwind answered lovingly. "I heard about Hollykit and Gleamkit," she added in a low voice. Skyfeather's face fell.

"I named them before they were buried," he said hoarsely. "I wanted

to wait for you, but you weren't waking up. You can name her, I suppose."

"I don't need your permission to do that," Frostwind said teasingly. "What do you think of Pebblekit?"

Skyfeather smiled. "I think that's a wonderful name. Pebblekit, Hollykit and Gleamkit."

"It'll only be Pebblekit for now," Frostwind meowed grimly. "I wanted to raise a full family with you."

"It's okay. Hollykit and Gleamkit will be happy in StarClan," Skyfeather comforted her, but he didn't sound happy either.

"Perhaps," Frostwind said doubtfully. She thought that kits would be happier with their birth mother, but maybe not. Hopeheart would look after them.

"Rest, Frostwind. You've been through a terrible ordeal and you were greatly weakened."

"Greatly weakened? Me? Have you got bees in your brain?" Frostwind demanded frostily. Greatly weakened? Her? No way! She was strong-willed and powerful, and kitting would not weaken her.

"Please rest," Skyfeather meowed pleadingly. "I don't want to lose you."

She narrowed her eyes. "Don't become too caring, mind you. I do make my own decisions."

"Of course, of course," he said innocently. "I'd never dream of telling you what to do."

She rolled her eyes and bid him goodnight.

Word count: 2399

On my ipad again. Anyway, some drama here, thank you if you made it to the end of the chapter! They weren't originally supposed to have kits and I've got no patience for the pregnancy segment so

you can see that was obviously rushed, but I like Pebblekit and she might actually play a part (I'm sorry y'all but if I stick to my current plan for Pebblekit, you are not going to like it).

Anyways, bye! You probably won't get an update on Friday since I'm updating on Wednesday.

# Chapter Twenty-four

Frostwind loved Pebblekit very much and yearned to spend every hour of her life with the milky white she-kit. She had beautiful light gray paws and Frostwind knew she would have the most beautiful of eyes. Maybe even purple like Frostwind herself.

It took a few days, but when her eyes finally opened, they were a gentle pale blue, slightly lighter than the blue of the sky. They were a lighter blue than Skyfeather's by far, yet still similar. Pebblekit had barely learned how to speak a few sentences, but Frostwind never got impatient with the innocent kit.

She did miss going on patrols, though, and most of all, she missed the tiny kits she had never had the chance to know. Hollykit and Gleamkit, who surely were happy in StarClan, but Frostwind had wanted them here, with her. Skyfeather remained strong for the both of them, and they never grazed the topic of the stillborns.

Hawkfeather checked on her regularly, saying she needed to keep her strength up. But Frostwind was no longer having problems with that. Upon seeing her beautiful daughter and loving mate, her will to live had returned, and now she laughed along at every joke made and eagerly watched Pebblekit take her first steps.

She fell over, and Frostwind couldn't resist laughing. Skyfeather wasn't there and Pebblekit was the only one in the nursery with her. Brightflame wasn't there. She had taken her kits on a walk through camp. Brightflame had been very boring with her kits' names. Firekit and Ivykit. The Clan had had many called Firekit and Ivykit in the past, so it definitely wasn't impressive naming on her part. But Brightflame had been a nice enough roommate, not to mention she was the sister of Stormwind. Not that Frostwind had ever liked her much.

Pebblekit stared frustratedly at the ground. She had been trying to walk all morning and Frostwind had just laughed at her. She felt a little bad and helped her daughter to her paws. "Go on," Frostwind

meowed encouragingly. Pebblekit looked apprehensive, but she slowly began to move forward again before almost instantly falling onto her side. She stared at Frostwind with accusing eyes.

"To be fair, you're only a week old," Frostwind reasoned with her feisty daughter, even though Pebblekit probably couldn't understand a word of what Frostwind said.

Pebblekit frowned. "I want to walk!" she squeaked in her adorable voice.

"Okay, try again," Frostwind mewed, helping her to her paws again. Pebblekit tottered a few steps before falling again. Frostwind caught her this time and gently used her tail to guide her daughter.

It took ages, but Pebblekit finally managed to take a few steps. She was early to be learning how to walk. Frostwind felt a surge of pride. The white she-kit then decided to go to sleep, just when Skyfeather returned.

He saw his daughter sleeping next to Frostwind and his eyes softened with love. "Tired?" he noted.

"She just learnt how to walk. She's an early bloomer."

"Usually, they say late bloomer."

"Well, I don't care, she's an early bloomer."

Skyfeather laughed softly and dropped a plump rabbit in front of her. Frostwind smiled gratefully. Had he sensed her hunger pangs, or had he just known that she hadn't had a chance to eat the whole day?

"Autumn is coming to an end," Skyfeather said warily. "Winter will be upon us before Pebblekit reaches a moon."

Frostwind saw his intentions. He was saying there wouldn't be much food to go round, and she would likely be starving a lot.

"I'll give you my food," he promised, and she hit him with her tail.

"Of course not. If you starve, who will hunt for the Clan?" she asked harshly. Skyfeather gave her a blank look.

"But I can't let you go hungry. Or Pebblekit, for that matter."

Frostwind shrugged. "We'll pull through. I'm more worried about Brightflame. She has two kits. Perhaps it's good that Hollykit and Gleamkit never made it past birth."

"Don't say that," he said immediately, then sighed. "I suppose so. I'd rather they be stillborn than starve to death. Save them the suffering."

Frostwind nodded in agreement. She hadn't been there on the horrific moment when she'd given birth to two stillborns. Apparently Pebblekit had been the last, and by then Skyfeather had almost given up hope in getting a live kit, but there she was, snuggled between them. Frostwind demolished the rabbit in a few rapid bites. Finally, food filled her stomach and the pain went away. She'd tried to keep her strength up, but she'd so wanted to be around when Pebblekit managed to walk, and had decided not to get prey for that reason.

Skyfeather grinned unexpectedly. "Want to go hunting with me?"

Frostwind smiled regretfully. "I'd love to, but what about Pebblekit?"

"Let's ask someone to watch her. Brightflame!" Skyfeather called softly. The orange queen jerked around, a question in her eyes. "Can you watch Pebblekit while Frostwind and I go hunt?"

An expression of irritation crossed her face. "Going hunting so soon after the birth of your kit? Well, fine, it's not like I've got anything better to do." She came over, Firekit and Ivykit on her heels and plopped herself down next to Pebblekit. "Off you go."

Skyfeather gave Frostwind a dazzling grin and he ran to the camp entrance. "Race you!"

Frostwind chased after him, her paws drumming against the forest floor, and she laughed with glee. She hadn't been out of camp in a

few days and she was claustrophobic. She chased him like the wind, and it blew her forwards, until she realized he had stopped and she accidentally crashed into him, bowling him over.

He was panting hard, his sides heaving, and he gave her a weird look. "Don't you get tired?" he asked her pointedly. Her breathing had hardly hastened.

"I've got stamina," she said, but he didn't look too tired himself. "Why did you stop?"

"Sniff the air."

She obliged and the pungent smell of rogues wafted over her. "AutumnClan, do you think?" she asked cautiously. You could never know, and AutumnClan's territory didn't exactly smell like AutumnClan anymore, so even if the rogues had been there that didn't mean anything.

Skyfeather nodded, and he started moving cautiously towards the border. Frostwind tapped him lightly with her tail. "We're hunting, not patrolling," she reminded him sternly.

Skyfeather frowned at her. "I thought you liked fighting?"

He hit a sore spot there, and despite being as in love with him as she ever could be, rage bubbled up inside of her, rage directed at him. "You think I like fighting? You think I like killing cats, getting their reeking blood on my claws, and you think it's pleasant, do you, to become the Clan leader's bodyguard when he asks you to kill for him?"

"I never said it was pleasant!" Skyfeather retorted. "You just kill so much that I was under the impression you were used to it." Cold rage was in his voice and Frostwind knew this wasn't going to go anywhere good but she didn't care.

"Well, good for you! Because I kill a lot, I've got a murderous heart, don't I!" she flared up. "In that case, you like murderers, don't you? Or maybe you hate me in secret?"

That, though, quieted him, and shock filled his eyes for a fleeting

moment before they returned to cold blue slits. "I knew you never wanted the kits," he said quietly, every breath filled with barely controlled fury. "You didn't want them, you barely mourned Hollykit and Gleamkit. The affection you show for Pebblekit... Is it a show, or what?"

"A show? You think I'm so heartless that I won't love my own kit?" Frostwind snarled. She unsheathed her claws and they scratched harmlessly against the ground. Rage blinded her and she didn't see her mate when she hurled herself at him.

He didn't defend himself and she crashed to the ground beside him. He had casually sidestepped. "I don't want to fight you," he said, but his icy tone said otherwise. "Whether you notice or not, I do love you. But what you have become is beyond my understanding. I... I've loved you since forever. Even since you were innocent, and... before the deaths."

Frostwind froze.

She'd never realized he'd loved her even before all that. She'd thought he was attracted by raw fighting skill, that he'd never once noticed her true personality. She knew that he cared, of course, because every moment he spent with her made her extremely happy. He was the perfect mate and here she was spitting in his face. Not that he hadn't brought it upon himself, but she was feeling the slightest bit of remorse right now.

"I... I never realized that," she meowed softly.

His blue eyes glowed with amusement. "You don't notice a lot of things, do you?"

She swatted him with a paw, but she had sheathed her claws and it was playful. He grinned at her, their fight already resolved.

"Well, I'm sorry to break up this cozy little making-up," Mousestar's voice came in a drawl, "but I can only watch you for so long."

Frostwind whipped around. In her fight with Skyfeather, she had completely forgotten the AutumnClan scent, and judging by the

horrified look in her mate's eyes, he had too. How careless they were. This was more important than any argument they had. The safety of their Clan was at risk! Even worse, Frostwind was not in peak fighting shape. The kitting had taken its toll on her and she knew that the only reason Skyfeather had invited her hunting despite the fact she was a queen was to help build up her strength again. She adored him for that, the way he cared for her and strived to look after her. But perhaps this time she had gotten unlucky.

"I thought you had kits, Frostwind?" Mousestar asked in his drawling voice. Frostwind frowned, wondering how he knew. Perhaps Stonestar had announced she was expecting a few gatherings ago.

*Hey there, cat cat, cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat cat!* A strange voice in Frostwind's head whispered.

Frostwind smiled devilishly. Indeed, it had been a long time since she had last been face-to-face with her old enemy, Turtleleaf.

"Been a while," she said in a friendly manner as the tortoiseshell she-cat stepped out from behind her leader.

The she-cat's eyes were smoky with rage. "Think I'm here for small talk, do you? You wrecked my Clan!"

"Well, you seemed like you wanted small talk. Wasn't that why you were trying to distract me?" Frostwind smiled pleasantly.

Skyfeather and Mousestar both looked at her with confused faces. Frostwind almost jumped. After all that time spent together, had she never told her mate about her communication power with the other prophecy cats? Now that she thought of it, did he even know the prophecy existed and she was in it?

"Looks like you never told him much," Turtleleaf meowed, her voice an identical drawl to Mousestar's.

"You two related or something?" Frostwind asked, inwardly panicking.

Turtleleaf looked offended. "Related? You insult me, Frostwind."

That earned her a cuff on the ear by Mousestar. "It is an honor to be related to me! Turtleleaf is my granddaughter."

Frostwind gave the leader a quirky grin. "Really? Who was dumb enough to mate with you?"

Surprisingly, Mousestar kept his cool. "Oh, many, many cats wanted to mate with me, even before I became deputy."

"Probably with a lack of personal feelings," Skyfeather muttered under his breath, and Frostwind gave him an appraising look. He had more mouth to him than she gave him credit for.

Mousestar completely ignored Skyfeather as though he were scum. "Oh, yes. Many, many she-cats. A particular one caught my eye, though. Turtleleaf's grandmother."

"Of course it was her grandmother. Who else would it be, her brother?" Skyfeather asked, rolling his eyes.

This time, Mousestar lost his patience. "SHUT UP, YOU!"

"Oh, I would shut up, very willingly, in fact," Skyfeather said coolly. "If you... hm... let's see... got off our territory."

"In case you haven't noticed, I'm actually standing behind the border," Mousestar said, his smile widenening into a Cheshire grin.

"Not quite," said Skyfeather, squinting his eyes. Frostwind tried to follow where he was looking at but she saw nothing and gave him a confused look. He only grinned playfully back before returning to fix his gaze on Mousestar. "If I'm not mistaken, that gray hair on our side of the border belongs to you." He looked up, malice glinting in his eyes. "You have trespassed."

Mousestar stared for a few seconds before bursting out in laughter. "HA! You think shedding counts? If it did, there would be so many wars overlapping, the Clans would have gone extinct centuries ago."

"It would not, actually, for only recently SeasonClan disbanded," Skyfeather said in his pleasant voice. Frostwind wanted to give him some sort of prize for being so annoying that Mousestar was struck speechless. He was even better than her, and she had all the practice. He turned to her and she gave him a wide grin.

"Good one," she meowed happily.

"GOOD ONE?" Mousestar thundered. "It was RIDICULOUS! NO LOGIC! AND YOU... MURDERER OF MY CLAN!"

"Is that my new title now?" Frostwind asked idly. Perhaps it was her turn to provoke Mousestar now!

"It has *always* been your title," Mousestar spat, every word with venom in it.

"Oh, how nice. Imagine calling a newborn kit a murderer," Frostwind continued even more idly. "Yes, yes, the mother would not be offended at all."

Mousestar was struggling with himself. It was oddly satisfying to see that Cheshire grin wiped completely off his mouse-like face. His tiny ears moved back and forth, probably detecting nothing. Who heard with ears as small as that?

But although Mousestar was struck speechless, Turtleleaf was not. The tortoiseshell she-cat watched Frostwind and Skyfeather tease her Clan leader with what seemed like amusement in her eyes. Was she finding something amusing?

Frostwind took three steps to Turtleleaf before the she-cat threw something in her face.

The adder injected venom into Frostwind's eyes and she let out a shriek of agony before collapsing to the ground, a writhing mass of fur and limbs.

**Word count: 2441**

**And I said I was skipping the Friday update? Well! I hope this chapter had quite enough substance to make up for my slowness in updating! It is a cliffhanger though... HEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEHEH**

# Chapter Twenty-five

*Skyfeather twisted and turned, his claws raking down Mousestar's back. He desperately tried to fight Mousestar and Turtleleaf both at once, while keeping them away from Frostwind's collapsed body. He didn't know how far gone his mate was. He'd shouted for help, but no help came, so he was left fighting the leader and deputy, hoping that somebody would come. He wasn't sure how deadly adder venom was, but he'd never experienced it before, and he hoped never to. What surprised him was that AutumnClan had managed to get adders at all, since their territory was the moor. But perhaps they had some hidden means that were unknown to him. That was highly likely - he wasn't a very well-informed cat.*

*They eventually gave up on him and left, because they knew the damage was done. Frostwind was crippled by the adder venom, maybe permanently. Skyfeather picked his mate up gently and was alarmed by how light she was. For someone who had the most powerful muscles in the Clan, she was light as a feather.*

*Sure, she had just gone through kitting, which might have made her lose some weight? But usually queens gained weight after that. Well, her kitting had been an unusual situation, not to mention it was winter. He personally hadn't had his midday meal the previous day, and his stomach rumbled with hunger even as he carried his feather-light mate back to camp.*

*There was no one on watch, which was horrifying. If he and Frostwind hadn't been there, Mousestar and Turtleleaf could have crept silently into camp and no one would have known! Thankfully, it meant that no one would slow him down. He knew Frostwind needed immediate treatment from Hawkfeather, and he wasn't even sure if Hawkfeather was experienced in adder bites. He tried anyway. He hauled her into the medicine den and placed her gently on the ground.*

*Hawkfeather had been sorting herbs but he instantly turned to Frostwind, his eyes widening in alarm. "What happened to her?" he gasped in dismay. He didn't know how to deal with adder bites and*

*panic was shining in his eyes.*

*"Adder bite! Please help her!" Skyfeather begged. He could see how helpless the medicine cat looked, but surely he could do something!*

*True enough, Hawkfeather's eyes narrowed determinedly and he quickly crafted a poultice which he placed on the bite. "It'll slow the venom from spreading," he said, in what should have been a calm voice, but he didn't sound calm at all, he sounded panicked. He quickly got all sorts of herbs and laid them out in front of the injured she-cat. Skyfeather recognized a few basic ones. Marigold and horsetail and cobwebs, for the usual injuries. Something Hawkfeather named as chamomile was also fed to her, apparently for strength.*

*Frostwind was growing pale and Skyfeather didn't need to be a medicine cat to know that the venom was spreading around her system. He didn't pepper the medicine cat with any questions about whether she would make it. He already knew the chances were slim; how on earth had Turtleleaf managed to carry the adder with her all the way? She had even talked, and laughed, and her concentration to keep the adder hidden had never broken. True enough, though, she hadn't joined the fight until after Frostwind was injured.*

*He didn't tear his eyes away from his mate, but he soon heard a soft mewling from the nursery and Pebblekit dashed out, closely followed by Brightflame who looked exasperated.*

*"Go tend to your daughter," Hawkfeather meowed abruptly. "I can tend to Frostwind on my own."*

*His choice of words was strange as Pebblekit was in no way injured, but Skyfeather obliged, knowing that he was only being a nuisance to the medicine cat by hanging around his den. He ran up to his daughter and licked her clean. The orange queen let out a sigh of relief.*

*"Where were you?" she growled impatiently. "You left her to me for almost an hour! My kits slept ages ago," she added, irritated, "but this one's been keeping me up! I haven't had a good night's sleep in forever and here she is not allowing me to do that! Why did you go to the medicine den? Frostwind can't need borage that urgently; she's only got one kit, for StarClan's sake."*

*Skyfeather pretended he still remembered the names of Brightflame's kits because he'd already forgotten and bid the orange queen a quiet goodbye before bending down to his daughter to gently scold her. "Pebblekit, you can't keep Brightflame up. She has her own kits, and queens need to squeeze in every ounce of rest they can get."*

*Pebblekit looked curious rather than annoyed. "But Mom doesn't get tired so easily, and she had problems kitting. I heard Brightflame's was smooth." Skyfeather was surprised that she could talk fluently already and kept it in mind to praise Frostwind for doing a good job... if she made it. His expression turned grim at once and his daughter noticed it. "Daddy, what's wrong with Mommy? Why hasn't she come back to the nursery already? Is she eating more yucky leaves?"*

*Skyfeather grinned. Now that was more like the daughter he remembered. But he couldn't be happy. Frostwind was dying in there. "Mommy became sick," he explained.*

*Pebblekit pouted. "She was fine when she left! Daddy, why did you have to take Mommy out? Now she's sick!"*

*"I wanted to help get her strength back," Skyfeather said, and it sounded like a lame excuse even to his ears. "But it was too much, and she's sick now."*

*Pebblekit continued pouting. "Daddy...."*

*Skyfeather scooped up his white daughter and brought her back to the nursery. Brightflame looked like she had barely settled down and her eyes cracked open. "Don't tell me you're leaving her with me again," the orange queen rasped softly.*

*"I'm sorry, please help me out," Skyfeather meowed. He then moved closer and whispered into her ear, "Frostwind was bitten by an adder. We're not sure if she'll make it."*

*Brightflame almost exclaimed loudly but looked twice at her sleeping kits and the curious-looking Pebblekit and asked softly, "Adders don't appear in our territory, do they? Is this going to be a danger for the future?"*

*"No," Skyfeather murmured back. "Turtleleaf and Mousestar brought the*

*adder, and they injured Frostwind and myself."*

*Brightflame looked over at Skyfeather's injuries, which he had been ignoring until that point even though the pain was spiking. "You should go get that tended," she said forcefully. "I'll look after her." She pushed Pebblekit closer to her own kits and the three snuggled up peacefully together. The orange queen smiled fondly, quite the contrast to the fiery orange warrior he remembered. "Now, quickly, before the little ones wake up."*

*The way she spoke made her sound a hundred times older than she actually was, but Skyfeather didn't complain and immediately left. He had a mate to look after, but his paws betrayed him as he treaded to the warrior's den instead of the medicine den. His injuries did not bother him; they were shallow for now. They could wait a night to be treated.*

*He had a fitful night of rest. How could he rest when Frostwind was injured, dying even? He woke up before dawn, and his paws brought him to the medicine den. To his mate.*

*Her face was ghostly pale, even paler than before. Hawkfeather was up, mixing poultices and arranging herbs. He looked like he hadn't even gone to sleep, and when Skyfeather met the medicine cat's sore eyes, he knew that indeed, he could not sleep with a patient.*

*"How is she?" Skyfeather whispered. Fear rocked his voice.*

*Hawkfeather was visibly struggling with himself. "She may or may not make it," he finally choked out. "The poison spread far. It didn't make it to her heart, brain or any vital organs, and though weakened it is moving around her system." He looked up. "You're lucky you brought her back when you did. Any longer and her chances would be slim. Right now, I give her a sixty percent chance. She's strong and I think she's faced worse before. Emotional trauma is sometimes worse than the physical, and she's had her fair share of emotional trauma." He looked down at the sleeping she-cat, but even asleep, she did not look peaceful. Her breaths came in ragged gasps, and she was in danger of awakening.*

*"The longer she remains asleep, the weaker she is," Hawkfeather meowed quietly. "If she never wakes up, the poison killed her from the inside. If she wakes, she can at least eat and drink to keep up her strength. If she*

*does not, she will die of starvation or dehydration. There are low chances if she fails to wake up within the next three days."*

*Three days. That was actually relieving. She had a chance, and a fairly good one at that. "Thank you, Hawkfeather," Skyfeather meowed, and he felt a little better. "If you don't mind, could I sleep with her?"*

*Hawkfeather paused, then nodded. "Yes, of course. Your warmth will provide her with warmth too. The poison makes the system cold. A companion will increase her chances of survival."*

*And so, Skyfeather lay down beside his beautiful mate, watching her chest rise and fall with every gasping breath, feeling a deep affection for the she-cat, but at the same time, fear trembled within him. She might die, and there was nothing he could do to stop it. Even now, the lovely she-cat was suffering. He wished he could take away her pain and the poison had been used on himself. He would rather suffer than watch her in pain. Her eyes opened now and then but they were glassy with pain and she wasn't properly awake. Hawkfeather said it wasn't counted as proper waking up.*

*The pain and fear in her eyes tortured Skyfeather. He wanted to take it all away. Most mates would, but he watched cats come and go over the next three days, and none of them even spared a glance for the medicine den. He knew Frostwind wasn't very well liked but he'd expected some sort of reaction! Her only visitor had been Pebblekit who was extremely worried for her mother. Stonestar had popped by, which had made Skyfeather pleasantly surprised before he asked how soon Frostwind could return to duty.*

*"She would be nursing kits anyway!" Skyfeather growled.*

*Frostwind was still producing milk, but Hawkfeather feared it was contaminated by the poison, and hadn't let Pebblekit near her mother. The white she-kit pottered around the medicine den, curiously sniffing at the herbs, and began dejectedly playing with a ball of borage leaves, her snow white paws shining out against the green.*

*Hawkfeather looked interested suddenly. "You think she'd want to be a medicine cat in the future?" the dark brown tabby asked.*

*Skyfeather shrugged. "Pebblekit?"*

*Pebblekit grimaced. "Herbs stink! No way!"*

*Hawkfeather smiled. "You're only a moon. Let's see how you feel a while from now."*

*Pebblekit gave him a determined look. "My opinion will not change!"*

*Hawkfeather laughed, only for his expression to turn grim again as he looked at Frostwind, ghostly pale, shivering. "It's the third day," he murmured. "If she doesn't... If she doesn't wake up, I... I..." He was stuttering so badly he couldn't even finish his sentence.*

*"I'll know it isn't your fault," Skyfeather meowed. He was actually slightly younger than Hawkfeather and it seemed weird to be comforting the older tom.*

*"It is my fault! I'm a stupid medicine cat." His eyes hardened. "But that's redundant. Right now, we need her to wake up."*

*"Let's make a lot of noise!" Pebblekit suggested energetically.*

*Hawkfeather smiled apologetically at the enthusiastic kit. "I'm sorry, but your mother needs rest right now. We'll let her wake up on her own."*

*"Well, that's mouse-brained!" Pebblekit exclaimed. "I'm going to wake her up myself!"*

*"No," Hawkfeather warned, but Pebblekit touched Frostwind so lightly she might well have been a feather. Hawkfeather gave a weak laugh as Pebblekit continued tapping her mother, each tap lighter than the last. "She's wasting time," he muttered to Skyfeather.*

*Skyfeather shrugged. "Is it harmful?"*

*Hawkfeather thought for a moment, then shook his head.*

*Skyfeather smiled wryly. "Well, kits have all the time in the world. She can waste it." The two toms shared a smile before they looked on at Frostwind and their expressions became worried.*

*Would she ever recover?*

Word count: 2041!!

I'm posting again!?? Wow!!! It has only been... Um... One and three quarter days!! That's awesome!! This one was written from Skyfeather's perspective since Frostwind is out and I needed to let y'all know what's happening.

# Chapter Twenty-six

Her eyesight was blurry and she could barely move.

Frostwind blinked open her eyes, taking in her surroundings. She felt weak, and she didn't know why. What had happened last? The fight with Turtleleaf? Her memory was fuzzy. She barely remembered Turtleleaf had brought out some sort of snake and tossed it at her.

It must have poisoned me, she realized, a little late, and she smiled to herself. It would take more than poison to take out Frostwind. She wasn't renowned for nothing.

There was no one beside her. She was in the medicine den which reeked of marigold, but Hawkfeather wasn't anywhere in sight. She noticed poultices laid on an open wound. Her few days training has a medicine cat had taught her not to go touching those.

Still, this place reeked. She had hoped that Hawkfeather would put some sort of air freshener in here. She had suggested lavender to him, but it seemed he wasn't following her advice. The stench of herbs was overwhelming and made her want to pass out.

Frostwind wondered what had happened to Skyfeather. He had been there with her. But someone must have brought her back to camp, so she knew he was alright. He wasn't in the medicine den with her at least. He could still be dead, though. But she didn't want to think that.

She was about to get up when she felt dizzy. Great. So she was going to be confined to the medicine den now, was she? She'd faced worse than some snake bites! But no medicine cat had discharged her, so she waited in boredom. I could probably discharge myself, she thought, I was a medicine cat for three days.

She grimaced. What kind of silly though was that? Yet, the pain at the bite area was numb. It was her right leg, which was so heavily

bandaged in cobwebs that it made her look incredibly fluffy, but with her fur sticking to her.

She was bored. There was nothing to do except gag on the toxic fumes released from the herbs. How was this a place of recovery, and how did anyone like this smell? Hawkfeather lived here! And slept here!

She was infuriated by lack of the ability to move, and sunk back into her nest. Frostwind waited for someone to come and visit her, or at least for Hawkfeather to return.

She hadn't realized how much she'd been hoping to see Skyfeather, and her hopes had come crashing down when grumpy Hawkfeather entered. Still, she forced a cool expression onto her face, then felt ashamed of herself. He had just saved her life, and here she was, thinking bad things about him.

His eyes widened to the size of the sun. "You're awake," he said, and his voice was tart. Frostwind purred slightly. Trust the grumpy medicine cat to say that! But he did look relieved. Then he glared at her. "Skyfeather has been driving me mad! Could you find some way to keep your mate quiet?"

"Let him in to see me?" Frostwind suggested. Her voice was lucid and clear, and if not for her pale color and inability to move her limbs, he would have thought she was completely alright.

"You're too weak," Hawkfeather responded. "How is your leg? Painful? Can you move?"

"My leg has a numb pain, and no, I can't move," Frostwind meowed. "I mean, I can, but it's painful." To prove her point, she moved her tail to the right and hissed in pain.

"Alright, don't move then," Hawkfeather meowed.

"How do I eat, then?" Frostwind asked.

Hawkfeather shrugged. "You can talk. Is it painful to talk?" She shook her head. "Right, you can move your head without hurting, so, eating should be fine. Drinking too, but you're in a weird

position for drinking and eating currently. We might need to roll you over. Can you move your front paws for me, please?"

She moved them gingerly. It was alright when she moved them at a snail's pace but when she tried to move them normal speed it hurt.

"Okay, so the poison didn't spread much to your upper body, but the lower body is very, very bad," Hawkfeather mused. "Alright then, I'll call somebody to bring you prey."

"How's Pebblekit?" Frostwind asked.

"She's fine, Brightflame is nursing her," Hawkfeather meowed. "Your milk may be contaminated. Anyway... SKYFEATHER!" he yowled loudly.

The white tom dashed into the den. "You're okay!" he gasped in relief when he saw Frostwind with her eyes opened. She smiled and nodded slightly. "What does she need? Prey? Water? I'll get it right away!"

"Prey, and some wet moss," Hawkfeather instructed him, and he scampered away. "You see. That tom has been nuts! He came in here every, I don't know, two minutes?"

Frostwind laughed softly. That was exactly what she wanted to hear. He had been concerned about her. That was all that mattered. As long as she still had him, she could live forever even if every step was pain.

***

She slowly recovered over the course of a few moons. By the time she could finally run and play again, it was time for Pebblekit to be apprenticed. Pebblekit had been very sweet to Frostwind, always bringing her prey and water, and she was happy to keep her mother company even when all Frostwind could do was talk. Pebblekit would tell Frostwind about her day, and everything that had happened, and then beg Frostwind to tell her battle stories. Frostwind obliged eagerly. Battle stories, she was full of.

Pebblekit was already six moons and so cute and matured. To

Frostwind's surprise, her daughter had chosen to train as a medicine cat. Hawkfeather had been simply delighted to take her on. Despite only being the same age as Amberfrost, the deputy, he proclaimed himself to be ancient and in need of a replacement medicine cat.

Meanwhile, the underground movement to overthrow Stonestar had began in earnest. They visibly challenged Stonestar at every Clan meeting and gathering, causing their fellows to lose confidence in their leader, especially when Stonestar could barely splutter a response. Amberfrost in particular had tried to change all of his decisions to wiser ones, but right in front of the Clan.

Hickorysnarl had also come to visit Frostwind several times, and the brown she-cat expressed her concern about the future of the Clan. "Amberfrost and Branchclaw challenge Stonestar every day," Hickorysnarl meowed worriedly, naming the deputy and her mate. "I think Branchclaw actually likes it! How could they do that? The Clan is already falling apart! I know Stonestar isn't the best leader, but he's the only one we've got."

"Well, it's about time for Pebblekit's apprentice ceremony," Frostwind sighed. "Let's see if they have anything to challenge him about there."

"You used to challenge him quite a lot," Hickorysnarl meowed pointedly.

"I know," Frostwind smiled at the fond memory. "I would love to continue, but I feel like that isn't what we need right now. I know Amberfrost and Branchclaw have the Clan's best interests at heart, but they're tearing the Clan apart to do it."

"Let all cats gather here for the Clan meeting!"

Frostwind frowned and trudged outside. She had been allowed to leave the medicine den and get some exercise, and she had even gone hunting with Skyfeather a few times. But she was not allowed to resume warrior duties and could only hunt about once a week. It was odd because Stonestar had called the Clan meeting in the middle of camp, and he was standing on the roof of the warrior's den.

"What is he thinking?" Hickorysnarl muttered unhappily. She had never gotten over the horrid name he had given her.

"Mouse-brained ideas, I'd bet," Frostwind meowed darkly as she dashed over to the warrior's den.

Pebblekit squealed in delight upon seeing her mother and ran over. "Hey! Stop it!" she mewed, wriggling as Frostwind attempted to wash her. "My fur looks ugly now!" Frostwind burst out laughing as her kit grumbled.

"Pebblekit, from this moment onwards, you will be known as Pebblepaw," Stonestar meowed without bothering to check if Pebblepaw was even standing there and she had to run over. "Your mentor will be myself."

Hawkfeather objected loudly. "Stonestar! She was supposed to be my apprentice!"

Stonestar turned an steely gaze on him. "The Clans are going to war," he meowed coldly. "We have no use for medicine cats. It is warriors that we need, and warriors we shall have."

There was an awkward silence before Skyfeather meowed, "Pebblepaw! Pebblepaw!" The Clan cheered along, though halfheartedly, and Pebblepaw herself didn't look happy. She kept glancing at Frostwind.

Pebblepaw ran to her mother as soon as the ceremony is over. "I don't want him to mentor me!" the white she-cat complained. "Frostwind, can you watch over all of our training sessions? I think he'll get me killed!" She looked so distressed that Frostwind nodded.

She followed Pebblepaw and Stonestar on their territory tour, ignoring Stonestar's protests and insisting that it was for her daughter's safety. Stonestar was unhappy, but Frostwind said that Pebblepaw was afraid of foxes and badgers, giving her daughter a tiny wink, and he grudgingly obliged.

Hawkfeather had become increasingly grumpy these days. He moped around camp, muttering under his breath about what a

brilliant medicine cat Pebblepaw would have made. Pebblepaw herself didn't go on about it. She said that the path of a warrior was a good one, too.

"Frostwind! Hey, Frostwind!" Frostwind turned around, grinning, thinking it was Skyfeather, only to recognize Blackfoot, Skyfeather's brother.

The grin slid off her face. "Oh, hello, Blackfoot," she said in a very flat voice.

Blackfoot kept on grinning anyway. "You're not very sociable, are you?" he noted. "Have to wonder what Skyfeather saw in you; he's like the most sociable cat ever."

Frostwind nodded absentmindedly. "I seem to recall you liked Twilightmoon, are you... Okay?"

Blackfoot blinked. "Oh, yeah, I'm fine! It was a little weird, because Twilightmoon's daughter Redleaf is the second medicine cat, but Hawkfeather still thinks he needs a successor, and he still wants Pebblepaw. Weird, right?"

"Oh!" Frostwind meowed, and felt a little embarrassed. While she had been out, her brother's kits had earned their names, Flametalon and Redleaf. Flametalon had been named after his brother, Talonpaw, who had died to an eagle during apprenticeship.

"Ha, yeah, can see you forgot. Anyway, Skyfeather sent me to call you for a border patrol, apparently Hawkfeather said you're good to go," Blackfoot meowed.

"Right," Frostwind said. Her thoughts were still on Redleaf. She had barely seen the tortoiseshell even in her moons in the medicine den. "What happened to Redleaf? I don't see her anywhere."

"Oh, would you know, Frostwind behind the times! Well, yeah, Redleaf went to help WinterClan with their greencough problem, she should be back any day now! Would you believe it? Winter's over!" Blackfoot meowed enthusiastically. "There will be flowers again!"

Is he flirting? Frostwind wondered. "Yeah, sure. Flowers. Right." She made a run for it.

Blackfoot stared after her, confused, but she had already reached Skyfeather who purred. "Blackfoot said something wrong to you?" he asked, amused.

"Just flirting," Frostwind meowed disgustedly.

Skyfeather shrugged. "Eh, he never quite got over Twilightmoon."

Frostwind smiled. "He said he did."

A smile crossed his lips. "Blackfoot always says things like that. I think... He never got over the deaths of our sisters, either."

"Stormwind?" Frostwind asked, surprised. Skyfeather had never seemed particular close to Frostwind's sworn sister.

"No, not Stormwind. Our littermates," Skyfeather explained. "We are the first litter of Silverlight and Lightningstrike. There were five of us: Blackfoot, Mistypool, Riverfall, Blossomleaf and myself. You want to know why Hawkfeather is so desperate for more apprentices? Because his other two, Blossomleaf and Morninglight, both died. Some reckon Morninglight had a forbidden relationship with Stonestar," he added softly.

"Oh, I knew that," Frostwind meowed, grinning.

He grinned back. "You did, did you? Well, anyway, Mistypool and Riverfall both died in battle, and Blossomleaf went into that coma that caused Silverlight to go berserk."

"When I was a kit. Wait, are you that much older than me?" Frostwind asked, amazed.

He was unfazed. "Yeah, I'm totally ancient. I don't really care, you know? I'm young at heart. I'm actually a senior warrior, did you know?"

"Nope," Frostwind meowed with a rueful grin.

"And you never told me about the telepathy!" Skyfeather added.

Frostwind's eyes about shot out of her head. "Wait, how did you find out about that?"

He smirked. "Turtleleaf and her big mouth. I've got her to thank."

"You also have her to thank for crippling me for moons," Frostwind pointed out wryly.

"And that," he agreed, still grinning.

"Something's up with you. Something very suspicious. Would you wipe that silly grin off your face and tell me what's going on?" Frostwind asked.

He only widened his grin. "Well, I suppose there's no hiding it. Blackfoot's getting a mate! And he asked me about her."

"Who is it?"

Skyfeather paused. "Oh, right. She might be another one you thought was dead."

Frostwind laughed. "I don't think everyone is dead!"

"Oh, you do," he said solemnly. "It's Squirreltail."

"Squirreltail? I thought she was dead!" Frostwind exclaimed in shock, then glared at him. "Wait, my old mentor?"

"Yeah, her."

"She fell in love with Blackfoot?"

"Yep."

"I do not approve."

Skyfeather grinned even wider, then stopped smiling at once. "Gee, it's painful to grin for so long."

Word count: 2171

On my ipad again. I think I've updated three times in the past four days. Cool?

# Chapter Twenty-seven

"Well, you can stop grinning if it hurts so much," Frostwind meowed before whacking him with her tail.

Skyfeather winced. "Okay, that hurts more."

Frostwind rolled her eyes. "No AutumnClan invasion in a while, huh?"

He closed his eyes before cracking one open. "You don't enjoy those, do you?"

"Well, they're quite... Refreshing," Frostwind meowed.

Skyfeather sighed. "Somebody who enjoys war. Remind me why I mated with you again?"

"Remind me why I put up with you again?" Frostwind asked innocently before whacking him again with her tail.

He actually took a step back this time. "Not funny! It actually hurts."

She narrowed her eyes. "You got some sort of back injury or something?"

"No."

"Then why would a tail smack hurt?" Frostwind asked.

Skyfeather hesitated for a moment before replying, "I'm fragile."

She burst out laughing. "That's the most ridiculous thing I've heard all week. Where are we hunting?"

"Near the SpringClan border," Skyfeather answered. "That's definitely safe. Snowstar has been tense recently, so WinterClan is quite dangerous at the moment. I don't think Snowstar would attack

us, but you never know. Springstar is peaceful, though. We'd never get attacked by SpringClan under her leadership."

"She's the only original Clan leader left, isn't she?" Frostwind asked.

"What? Oh, yeah, probably. Well, do you want to go?"

Frostwind nodded and they quickly headed to the SpringClan border. Frostwind stopped to say hello to a passing patrol before realizing it wasn't a patrol, it was only one cat, and that one cat was Streamlight, with a look of urgency on her face.

"Hello," she said hurriedly. "Frostwind, can I speak to you in private?"

"Sure," Frostwind meowed uneasily before glancing at Skyfeather who gave her a questioning look.

"It's important," Streamlight added imploringly, seeing Frostwind's hesitance.

"Well, if you say so," Frostwind meowed. She approached Streamlight and her friend tugged her under a bush in SpringClan territory.

"I'll explain your scent to Springstar later," Streamlight promised. "Go hunt!" she called loudly.

Frostwind heard the rustling of leaves, which she supposed meant that Skyfeather had left. "What happened?" she asked.

"Turtleleaf has been talking a lot to Flamewing. They found some way to open a private chatgroup through our mental telepathy, and apparently, they've been plotting." Streamlight's eyes narrowed. "Frostwind, I think the prophecy is about to come true. Turtleleaf has brought the flames."

"Now Flamewing will bring destruction," Frostwind meowed. "Which is now time for you. Bring peace, Streamlight."

She appeared even more desperate. "I can't bring peace! Turtleleaf and Flamewing won't even hear me out! How am I supposed to

reason with them?"

"Any way you can," Frostwind soothed.

Streamlight relaxed herself. "Well, I'll try. But I think the snow white cat needs to save the Clans."

Frostwind curled her lip. "Well, I'm not ready."

Streamlight gave her an exasperated look. "No one is ready, Frostwind. Don't you want to make the world a better place for your daughter to grow up in?"

Frostwind thought of Pebblepaw, so innocent, so loving.

"Of course I do," she meowed softly. "I'd do anything for her to live in a happier place."

"Then remember," Streamlight meowed, "the only way for that to happen is if the Clans unite. Every leader was given that message, and Springstar is no different. Unfortunately, she is unwilling to act. The safety of us SpringClan cats is more important to her than the unity of the Clans." She closed her eyes. "I try to see it from her eyes, but it is difficult."

"Springstar only wants what's best. Are you even sure uniting is a good option?" Frostwind asked desperately. Any way to worm herself out of this situation. She would have a hard time convincing Stonestar to unite.

"AutumnClan is already so destroyed," Streamlight pointed out. "It won't be hard to kill off Mousestar and Turtleleaf. SpringClan will combine willingly. Springstar is on her last life already. The problem is Snowstar and Stonestar. They're relatively new leaders and like being in control. Is this accurate?"

Frostwind nodded. She wasn't sure about Snowstar, but Stonestar certainly revelled in his leadership, finding joy in bossing others around.

"Well, those two are going to be hard to get rid of. But I know that Snowstar lost a lot of lives to greencough last winter. Maybe four,

or five. And a bunch of other reasons too. Unless I calculated wrongly, she's either on her second last or last life," Streamlight meowed.

Frostwind frowned. She wondered how Streamlight was calculating all these losses of lives. Weren't leaders secretive about the number of lives they had left? Not to mention Streamlight was so open about it. But she'd never given Frostwind a reason to doubt her, so...

"You want to get rid of Snowstar, Mousestar and Stonestar," Frostwind meowed slowly. "Then what about Springstar?"

"She's on her last life, and Springstar is reasonable. I think she'll let you lead," Streamlight explained.

Frostwind nodded. "Right. Wait... Let me lead?"

"Yes, you. I can't think of a better leader, can you?" Streamlight asked.

"You?" Frostwind suggested.

Streamlight shook her head. "I won't be able to make any difficult choices, not to mention I don't have the dominant will to command a Clan."

"True," Frostwind acknowledged, "true."

"So, will you think about it?" Streamlight asked desperately.

Frostwind nodded. "Yeah. Uniting, is it?"

"You could persuade Stonestar to give up his lives peacefully."

Frostwind choked on saliva. "Listen, Streamlight, I don't know where you got this positive perspective of Stonestar but he doesn't submit easily."

Streamlight shrugged. "Worth a try."

Frostwind shook her head. "Not to me."

Streamlight smiled. "How are you a mother? You're the same old carefree warrior I knew."

Frostwind shrugged indifferently. "It's not like it matters, anyway I didn't play a major role in Pebblepaw's life."

Streamlight nodded understandingly. "I see."

Frostwind said her goodbyes and left. Streamlight seemed uncharacteristically reserved, and she moved away hesitantly, like she'd had more to say. Still, Frostwind had intended to go hunting with Skyfeather, and that was what she was going to do. She looked around for him but refrained from calling his name. That might scare away the prey he was stalking as well as half the forest.

Suddenly, she caught a whiff of rogue. AutumnClan? She wondered, because even Mousestar and Turtleleaf didn't smell like AutumnClan anymore. They hung around with rogues way too much, their scent had been erased. Even AutumnClan territory reeked of rogue. Frostwind highly doubted they would ever get the old AutumnClan scent back. Too many of them were dead.

AutumnClan territory was a vast moor with rabbits springing out of burrows. Frostwind had liked the breeze here, but the lack of shelter was disturbing. How did they get about on hot days? The sun would scorch their fur! She sniffed the air again, then stopped, wishing she'd been mistaken. Skyfeather's scent mingled with the rogue, and there was a slight blood scent as well.

She didn't want it. She didn't want to smell the scent she knew was there. If there was any chance that he had... She couldn't give up hope. Frostwind followed the scent trail, every step filling her with dread. She knew what was coming but that didn't make it any less terrifying.

Lying on the ground, white fur tainted with blood, was Skyfeather. Frostwind let out a wail of despair and ran up to his body. It was still warm, but he had no heartbeat. She licked his ears and came back with the terrible taste of blood. She brushed aside some of the blood covering his face and eyes, and spotted his last look, one of horror, his mouth open in an unfinished word.

He had been surprise attacked, and he'd been powerless to stop it.

Frostwind was crying so hard she was shaking, an she didn't think she'd ever be happy again. Forget Pebblepaw. Who was she after Skyfeather? Frostwind could live without her daughter, but without her mate? She clutched at his body, breathing onto his face, her breaths coming in ragged gasps through her tears. Not after what he'd promised. He'd promised never to leave her, and yet here he was, dead.

He hadn't intentionally let her but he had left her anyway. Frostwind let him fall back to the ground but caught him before he hit it. He was dead and she couldn't turn back time. Why couldn't she? Her love was gone and there was no way to bring him back.

She shook his lifeless body and only fresh blood splattered off him. She winced at the horrid stench and fresh tears appeared in her eyes. She placed him gently onto the ground and collapsed beside him.

She wanted her life to be over. This time, there was nothing worth living for.

"I knew this would break you," a snide voice taunted. "I knew it would break you so I did it. Of course you're so weak, you'll never get over it."

Frostwind wanted to wrench Turtleleaf's heart out of her chest, but she was too overcome with grief. And she wasn't going to kill someone right in front of Skyfeather's dead body. It was wrong somehow.

"See? You're broken. I'm taunting you but you won't even hurt me," Turtleleaf sneered. "You see? Mousestar insisted you were strong, but you're only strong on the outside. Kill someone close to you, and you'll wither like a leaf."

Frostwind's eyes sparked. "A withering leaf like you."

Life rekindled in her eyes only for a few moments, but those moments, few as they were, were enough to send her launching

across the grassy field, sending Turtleleaf flying across the grass, her blood staining the bright green. Frostwind leapt again, her claws piercing her enemy's chest, pinning her to the ground, her eyes filled with pure hatred.

But Turtleleaf was no ordinary enemy. She had more skill than Mousestar, and she flung Frostwind off her, landing on her paws with a hiss of fury.

"You're not broken, huh?" she taunted. "I just need to kill another one, right? Who next? Pebblepaw? Cloudbeam?"

Frostwind's eyes filled with rage. "You can never hurt me more than you already have."

Turtleleaf looked gleeful. "Well then! You're as broken as you'll get! Now I can fight someone mad with rage who can't think properly!"

"You're forgetting something," Frostwind meowed softly, her every breath dangerous, furious aura radiating from her. Turtleleaf took an involuntary step backwards, now sweating nervously. "You forget that Skyfeather was the only one preventing me from becoming the monster I truly am."

This time, real fear shone in Turtleleaf's eyes. The tortoiseshell was suddenly afraid, suddenly fearing for her life. "Be... Be grateful it was only Skyfeather!" Turtleleaf spluttered. "I was going to kill your whole family!"

Frostwind's eyes were smoking. "To kill any more of them, you'll have to go through me first."

She let the monster inside out, let rage control her, and Turtleleaf was dead to her claws in a few seconds.

Knowing that, Frostwind sagged to the ground. She'd been trying to avoid this! But Turtleleaf had pushed her to it.

Again her gaze flickered to the destroyed body of her mate. He had loved her even when she was a monster, and he'd helped her out of it. But now she was back at that stage again, and this time, he wasn't there to help her.

Frostwind was choked with grief. It was over. Every purpose she'd ever had and it was down the drain! For what purpose? Why was she striving to be good enough for everyone?

Why did she care?

She faltered, she didn't want to go any further and she knew she didn't have to.

She could end her life right here.

Should she?

Doubt formed in her mind. She would leave Pebblepaw, a brand new apprentice, orphaned in three hours. Three hours ago, Pebblepaw had had both her parents both doting on her, caring for her. If Frostwind killed herself, then the poor she-cat would have no parents.

More than that, Skyfeather wouldn't want her to do it. He wouldn't want her to end her life just because Turtleleaf had ended his. He would want her to move on, to overcome the challenges presented by life, to be more than her pain. She only wished she could be the cat who he deserved. Someone perfect and lovely. Someone who wasn't a monster deep inside.

She stared at the sky. Night was falling and the stars glittered. "Which one is you?" she whispered. "Will you stay with me forever?"

One by one, the stars winked out, until only one remained, shining brightly. It shot down an Frostwind was so shocked she ran.

But the star transformed into her mate, standing above his body.

"Move on," he whispered, his voice carried by the wind.

"I can't! I want you. I only ever wanted you." The words sounded stupid, but they were the only things she was sure about at that point.

"I want you, too, but above all, I want you to be happy. Wouldn't

you feel eternally guilty that you orphaned Pebblepaw? I feel guilty, and I'm not even responsible for my own death," Skyfeather meowed.

White hot tears ran down her cheeks. "But I don't know if Pebblepaw is worth living."

"Then do it for me. It's the last favor I'll ever ask of you. Stay here, look after Pebblepaw and unite the Clans."

"That's a big favor," she meowed wryly.

Skyfeather smiled. "Of course it is. I'm me."

He paused before adding, "I am who I am. And you are who you are."

"Gee, that's helpful!" Frostwind exclaimed.

Skyfeather smiled. "Just think about one thing."

She leaned in closer.

"Who are you?"

And then he was gone, leaving her sitting alone with his dead body, her mouth constant mouthing the question he had asked her.

Who was she?

**Word count: 2213**

I'm honestly really proud of this chapter, but it was really, really hard to write. I'm sorry I'm literally almost crying rn.

# Chapter Twenty-eight

I am Frostwind.

No, it wasn't working. Frostwind shook her head unhappily.

She had been trying to find out exactly who she was for the past week, and she'd been beginning to think that Skyfeather had been blabbering nonsense. She had buried him herself among flowers, wanting him to be peaceful in death.

She hadn't spoken to anyone since he died and had even turned away Pebblepaw on several occasions.

She didn't know why, but she didn't want to see anyone. No one could ever replace her mate. Even her own daughter was probably revolted just by her face.

Frostwind felt a pang of guilt. She knew that wasn't true, knew Pebblepaw genuinely loved her. But it was so hard to love now.

Besides, to visit Pebblepaw would mean to visit the stench of the medicine den. Perhaps she should have agreed on the few occasions that Pebblepaw had sought her out. It seemed her daughter had given up now.

"Frostwind! Hey, Frostwind! Great StarClan, are you daydreaming again?"

Frostwind snapped out of it, whirling around. She almost unsheathed her claws but it was Hickorysnarl in front of her. She visibly relaxed. "Oh, hello," she meowed, distracted.

"I've been assigned to a border patrol, could you join me?" Hickorysnarl asked.

"Sure," Frostwind mumbled.

Hickorysnarl peered at her face. "Frostwind. I know you're sad, but life moves on, okay? Skyfeather wouldn't want you to be moping like this." She gave the medicine den a sideways glance. "Or ignoring your daughter. Pebblepaw has no one to turn to."

"What about Brightflame's kits?"

"Well, one of them died yesterday, remember?"

"Which one?"

Hickorysnarl rolled her eyes. "Never mind. Anyway, only Firepaw is left of Brightflame's kits, and you know Pebblepaw doesn't like Firepaw."

"She doesn't?"

Hickorysnarl groaned. "Great StarClan! Do I know her better than you?"

"... maybe?"

Hickorysnarl rolled her eyes. "Well, ANYWAY, let's just go on patrol. Okay?"

"Which border?" Frostwind asked absently.

"AutumnClan, we're still patrolling their border for whatever reason. You have to wonder why rogues keep joining Mousestar; I mean, his name even implies that he's mouse-brained."

Frostwind found herself unable to keep up with her former apprentice's constant chatter and ended up spacing out right in front of her. That earned her a slap to the face but also quieted Hickorysnarl, and before long they were heading on patrol.

Frostwind had to push down the anger that overcame her as they passed the spot where Skyfeather had died. Despite it being a rainy week to celebrate the coming of spring, the grass was still tinged pink, and Turtleleaf's scent hadn't completely washed away.

Hickorysnarl glanced a little worriedly at her former mentor before

steering the patrol away from that path. She seemed to want to keep Frostwind away from that area, and Frostwind didn't argue. She didn't have any good memories.

"You! What did you do to my deputy?" Mousestar howled. He was still on his side of the border but he looked anguished.

Frostwind had thrown Turtleleaf's body over into AutumnClan territory after killing her and apparently he had noticed. Frostwind smirked. "I killed her, obviously."

"I knew you were savage."

"She killed my mate," Frostwind pointed out.

"Yes, but - she had her Clan's best interests at heart!"

"Doesn't look like I care, does it?" Frostwind asked coolly.

Mousestar looked furious but he also had nothing to say in response. Frostwind's smirk grew wider, but it also troubled her that she hadn't had a real smile in days. Skyfeather's death had sapped the life out of her. The last thing she needed was Mousestar at that point. Frostwind motioned to Hickorysnarl to leave but her former apprentice stood her ground, her lip curling. Frostwind had never seen Hickorysnarl in uncontrolled anger before, but now she was. She moved towards the brown she-cat and Hickorysnarl growled at her.

"Attack!" Hickorysnarl snarled.

Not very wise, Frostwind thought, but she didn't have anything else to say. Hickorysnarl ran like the wind, pouncing on Mousestar and both disappeared in a flurry of paws. The rest of the patrol remained stationary and looked at Frostwind.

Really? They wouldn't listen to Hickorysnarl, she could understand. But no one had ever trusted her judgment. Frostwind looked around and the entire patrol nodded in agreement, even Windecho! He was willing to trust her?

Frostwind let out a shuddering sigh. "Someone go rescue

Hickorysnarl and let's leave."

Windecho looked surprised yet appreciative. "A wise decision," he meowed as though he were a senior warrior. "Congratulations."

"Congratulations to you for not being a prat for three minutes. Can we get a move on? Should rescue her?" Frostwind asked.

Everybody avoided her eyes.

Frostwind sighed. "It's got to be me, doesn't it? Well, let's see. Hey, Mousey Stars."

Immediately, shouting with rage, Mousestar ran over and nearly bowled her over. But he was ancient and she was a youthful soul. Well, perhaps not ancient exactly, but he had white hairs around his muzzle. Stress, she reflected, thinking about what he'd been going through.

"You dare? The time that Stonestar and I were pals is over! Life moves on!"

"Then get over the death of your deputy," Frostwind meowed calmly. "If I'm not terrorizing you for murdering my mate, I don't see why you should be holding grudges."

"She was the last true AutumnClan cat in my Clan," Mousestar meowed, anguished.

"Well, she threw her own life away. Hardly my fault, is it? Toodles. Where's Hickorysnarl?"

"I killed her."

Frostwind froze before looking around to see Hickorysnarl limping over and gave him a flat look. "Very funny. Get lost."

Mousestar hissed and whipped around to storm away before turning his head back slightly. His neck cracked, the bubble in his synovial fluid popping.

"If that was a threat from you, I'm not afraid!" he yowled

confidently. "I may no longer have my Clan to back me, but I have more recruits!"

"Beats me why you do. Thought your stench would have scared them away already," Frostwind meowed casually.

He didn't find it funny, but didn't have anything else to say, either. Shooting her a loathing glance, he sprinted away with his tail between his legs. Frostwind smirked in satisfaction before turning to her former apprentice in concern, but Hickorysnarl evidently wasn't in the mood for niceties.

"Why didn't you attack when I told you to?" the brown she-cat demanded of her patrol, whipping around to glare at each and every one of them.

"It was a foolish move," Windecho said flatly.

"It was just him there! One cat!"

Windecho shrugged. "I don't fancy dying and I don't think anyone else here does. What really surprised me was that my sister gave the command not to fight." He gave Frostwind an appraising look, and her heart stopped.

Had he just called her his sister?

She stared at him, her eyes wide and round, and he gave the tiniest fraction of a nod.

She didn't think it was possible for her to be happy after Skyfeather's death, but she was now. A smile curved at the corners of her lips, and she didn't dare look in her brother's way. Her brother. It felt good to hear that if only in her mind. They'd always been related by blood, but for as long as she could remember, he'd renounced his ties with her.

Frostwind was ready for a new beginning, and when he motioned to her with his tail when they got to camp, she followed him willingly to the side.

"Frostwind... I'm sorry. I was blinded by my ego, I thought you were

the favorite child and I was jealous of you. I shouldn't have told everyone bad things about you, and I shouldn't have said you weren't my sister," Windecho began. His voice was quiet, pleading for forgiveness, and for once, forgiveness she was willing to give.

"It's fine," she meowed, and her voice shook with emotion from even those two words.

Windecho looked up in wonder. "You never stopped wishing I would someday call you my sister, did you?"

Frostwind shook her head. "I didn't have family. We didn't have family. We were orphans, all we had was each other, and I thought you'd see sense."

"I should have, earlier," Windecho meowed gravely. "And I missed out on my time as an uncle." He looked in the direction of the medicine den, his gaze softening as it landed on a certain beautiful white she-cat. "Pebblepaw is amazing, isn't she? She keeps going, always." He spoke with an uncle's love. It was weird, because he'd never approved of anyone she'd made friends with.

"She is. I... need to talk to her, actually. I think I've been neglecting her," Frostwind meowed uneasily. She still wasn't used to talking at length with Windecho. It was so awkward! He wasn't the brother... well, the tom she remembered at all.

Was this what her brother was truly like, deep down? Apologetic, regretful?

Windecho nodded understandingly. "Right. I'll understand if you don't want anything to do with me. I was the most horrible cat to you." He cracked a hopeful grin. "But... I hope that's over, now?"

Frostwind nodded. "Yeah, sure. A new beginning."

The skies cleared of clouds, showing a bright sun.

"Truly," he whispered, "a new beginning."

Frostwind left him staring at the sun and probably killing his eyes to head for the medicine den. Pebblepaw perked up when she

arrived and ran up to her mother.

"Are you ready to talk to me again?" the sweet apprentice asked.

Frostwind nuzzled her affectionately. "Yes, I am. I'm sorry for ignoring you. I... wasn't in the right state of mind. The loss of Skyfeather came harder on me that I expected."

Pebblepaw froze and took a step back. "How did he die?" she asked. She'd obviously been dying to ask this question for days.

"Turtleleaf killed him. I got her in return," Frostwind meowed.

"Mother, can I ask you a question?"

Frostwind nodded.

"If I asked you to stop taking revenge, would you do it for me?"

Frostwind struggled with herself, the monster inside wanting to be set free, to scream no in her face, but she wrestled with herself before sighing. "I wish I could promise you," she meowed. "But there's a problem with me. Something in me yells for me to take revenge, blinds me with anger that I can't say is unjust."

Pebblepaw nodded. "I understand that, it's perfectly fine. But... please don't ignore me again. I know I'm not Skyfeather and you don't love me as much, and we've never had much of a relationship but you're the only family I have."

Frostwind thought for a moment. "You know, it's high time I introduced you to your uncle."

"Cloudbeam? I know him already."

Frostwind gave a little laugh. "No, I have another brother. We were arguing before this, but we've finally smoothed things out and we're talking again. Considering he renounced the fact that I'm his sister, I think this is a good start. He's Windecho."

Pebblepaw shuddered. "Isn't he super grumpy?"

Frostwind laughed softly. "Well, he is. Maybe a little love would spice his life up! Don't think anyone's interested in him though."

Pebblepaw wrinkled her nose. "Who would? Oh, by the way, there's a gathering tonight. Are you going?"

Frostwind shrugged. "I don't know and I don't really care." Streamlight might single her out again. The thought made her pelt prickle.

Pebblepaw frowned. "Why not? Gatherings are exciting! Anyway, do you want to ask Stonestar? I'm going and so is Redleaf! Hawkfeather is staying behind though."

Frostwind suddenly realized out loud, "Redleaf is your cousin."

Pebblepaw flicked her tail happily. "I know! Isn't it weird? My cousin is training me! But Redleaf is really nice. Hawkfeather's a grump, but... who cares!" She seemed actually cheerful, contrast to Frostwind who was always solemn.

"I'll go and ask Stonestar if I'm going," Frostwind meowed heavily, turning away from her daughter. Pebblepaw looked up in curiosity at her mother's tired tone.

"You don't want to go?" the cute she-cat asked, surprised. "Don't you wanna see your friends from the other Clans?"

"Friends?" Frostwind asked darkly. "Mousestar isn't going to be happy to see me."

Pebblepaw shrugged. "He's one cat. Make some friends! Last moon I met Streamlight from SpringClan, she's a bit grave, a little, but she's cheery and happy and..." She lowered her voice. "I think Flamewing from WinterClan has a crush on her! It's cute, but it's not a good relationship, you know? Two Clans."

Frostwind nodded, quite oblivious to the chatter, not bothering to join in herself. "Yeah," she muttered. "Oh, well." She glanced up at the sky. "What have you got in store for me this time, StarClan?"

Word count: 2031

Not my most perfect number. I struggled a lot writing his chapter due to writer's block and many other factors, but I'll work harder on the next one, I promise!

# Chapter Twenty-nine

"Am I attending the gathering?" Frostwind asked.

Stonestar sniffed, "Do you think you deserve to?"

"Well, that's settled then," Frostwind said and trotted away.

He shouted after her, but she didn't listen and sped up slightly before bumping into Windecho. Her first instinct was to say something snarky but she held herself back, watching him intently.

"Um... so you're going to the gathering?" he mumbled.

Frostwind nodded. "Yeah, well, I think so, a certain fat gray tom wasn't very clear." She narrowed her eyes at Stonestar and Windecho laughed.

The gathering took place on a full moon as usual, but Frostwind wasn't ready to nearly get pounced on by Flamewing, who landed next to her, his eyes glittering with malice she hadn't even imagined the peaceful cat could have.

"What did you do to Turtleleaf?" Flamewing snarled. "I can't even connect to her anymore!"

"Simple," Frostwind said without remorse, "I killed her. What did you think it was?"

Flamewing hissed under his breath. "You realize that I'll be the end of you?"

"Contrary to that, I believe I'll end up ending you the same pretty way I ended Turtleleaf."

His breathing grew ragged and he shot her one last look filled with hatred and fury before stalking away. Once he was gone, Streamlight joined Frostwind, her eyes light with amusement.

"He's a bit crazy, isn't he? Also, did you really kill Turtleleaf?"

"She killed Skyfeather," Frostwind said, and her mate's death still felt raw and painful. She'd actually let Turtleleaf kill her own mate - that was awful. But... at least they were one enemy down.

"I can see Flamewing bringing destruction now," Streamlight shivered. "He'll probably convince WinterClan to side with AutumnClan."

"Well, it's not like WinterClan wants to become one as SeasonClan anymore either."

"Point taken," Streamlight agreed, "but... I'd hoped that WinterClan would remain on our side."

Frostwind shook her head. That had never been even a remote possibility. Trying her best not to look like she'd expected it all along, Frostwind slipped away from Streamlight and went to Pebblepaw. Mothers were probably supposed to be hanging around their kits to make sure they were alright.

Then again, so were the fathers.

Frostwind looked up at the sky and let out a long sigh. Skyfeather, I hope you're watching, she thought as the gathering began.

Mousestar was sitting on the Great Oak with several rogues grumbling on the roots. They were a scraggly bunch.

"AutumnClan would like to know why SummerClan made an unprovoked attack that killed my deputy!" Mousestar snarled.

"That same deputy killed my mate!" Frostwind flashed back, baring her teeth at the AutumnClan leader. He could die for all she cared.

"She acted with her Clan's best interests at heart!" Mousestar fired back.

"Well, I acted with the best interests of mine," Frostwind retorted. "Aren't you the one always attacking? Turtleleaf trespassed and killed one of her cats. This means war, Mousestar."

"What?" Stonestar practically squeaked. "No, it doesn't! It doesn't at all! Nope! Not at all! We... SummerClan is peaceful!" he insisted.

Half the SummerClan cats were staring at him as though he was insane, and Frostwind saw she wasn't the only one groaning. Amberfrost was as well, along with her supporters.

Which, now that she noticed, were a lot. They were all for overthrowing Stonestar and appointing Amberfrost as leader, but Frostwind saw another option.

Amberfrost could become leader of the united SeasonClan. She was sure the deputy would see reason. Amberfrost was an amazing cat.

"No, it does mean war," Amberfrost said, stepping up. Stonestar shot her a glare, but she didn't care. "If you continue trespassing and killing our cats, we will fight you. Who do you even have as an army anyway? Your scraggly rogues?"

"Scraggly!" shouted one of the rogues at the front. He was sitting on the deputies' tree root. No way! Mousestar had appointed a rogue as deputy? Well... Then again, it wasn't like he had anyone else.

"Yes, scraggly," Amberfrost snapped. "You can't trespass on our land and kill Skyfeather without expecting anything to happen to you, you fox-hearts."

"We didn't kill Skyfeather!" the deputy snapped, fury in his eyes.

"Oh, but your Clanmates did. Your deputy, in fact," Amberfrost said, her eyes glittering.

Frostwind had had enough of being silent. She walked forward, ignoring Stonestar's eyes boring into her back. "I don't care who you are or what you can do," she hissed, and every cat at the gathering could hear the venom in her voice. "If you lay a claw on any of my Clanmates again, I will end you."

"Frostwind! Amberfrost! Stand down!" Stonestar snarled. He sounded aghast. "Mousestar, I'm sorry for what my Clanmates have said. We do not intend any disrespect to AutumnClan."

"More like RogueClan," Windecho muttered unhappily, glaring up at his leader. Frostwind wasn't any more pleased than he was.

Couldn't Stonestar just defend their argument?! They were in the right and Mousestar was in the wrong! Now all the other Clans were going to see them as weak.

"You see what I mean?" Frostwind overheard Twilightmoon whispering to Cloudbeam. "This is why I think we should support Amberfrost. Stonestar is a weak leader."

Frostwind knew she should probably tell Twilightmoon off, but she didn't have the heart to do so. Twilightmoon was right. Stonestar was going to make SummerClan the weakest Clan out of the four.

"Windecho," Frostwind motioned to her gray brother.

Looking shocked and confused, Windecho shuffled over. "Yes? Did you want something... Sister?"

She smiled at him, but that wasn't what she was going for. "I need you to buy me some time later."

"At a gathering?" he asked.

"No. When we're leaving. I need to talk to Streamlight of SpringClan, and I don't want Stonestar coming after me."

"I can do that," Windecho said confidently, and he rasped his tongue over her ear. "Hey, you're... Alright, aren't you? I... I know you really loved Skyfeather, and... Um... I know we weren't on the best terms, but you can talk to me. I promise."

She almost spat out that his promises were worthless to her, but she didn't hate him anymore. They were siblings and he was pretty much all she had other than Cloudbeam and Pebblepaw. And Pebblepaw had enough going on by herself. She didn't need to be dragged into her mother's messes.

"I know. I'm... I'm in a prophecy, okay? And so is Streamlight, and... We need to solve this whole mess." Frostwind gazed up at the sky where clouds were beginning to cover the moon. "Oh, that's not

good."

"StarClan is angry!" Springstar called. "We must leave."

"Frostwind!" Streamlight hissed, and Frostwind nodded, slowly making her way over to the she-cat.

"In that bush, quick," Frostwind whispered, pointing at a very leafy bush to hide in.

Streamlight dove in headfirst.

Frostwind entered more cautiously and barely dodged some thorns. "Streamlight, you okay?"

"Stupid thorns," Streamlight hissed, pulling a thorn out of her paw. "You and I really need to talk."

"I was thinking the same thing," Frostwind agreed. "The prophecy... It's going to come true soon, isn't it?"

"Yes... And not only that. Can we count on Stonestar to help us or not?" Streamlight flicked her tail angrily. "I've talked to Springstar about the prophecy. Okay, she wasn't too happy about all the secrets, but... She'll help us if she needs to, she said. She's not going to start a war herself, which is fine, but she said if we get attacked or you do, she'll help. But Stonestar isn't, is he? He's pretending to be Mousestar's best friend! He's so meek, Frostwind!"

"Whoa, calm down," Frostwind said, frowning. Her usually calm and collected friend was practically jumping around.

Streamlight flattened her fur and sighed. "Yeah, I know. I'm sorry. I just... I worked out a plan, but it won't work if Stonestar doesn't cooperate."

"Yeah... I sorta have a plan too. And it involves Amberfrost."

"The deputy?" Interest sparked in Streamlight's eyes.

"Yes. Amberfrost has a lot of support, and many of the SummerClan cats want to overthrow Stonestar. I think I can tell Amberfrost

about this. Stonestar's bound to die in the war anyway."

"But Amberfrost is fine not being leader later on?" Streamlight asked curiously.

"What do you mean? She can be leader," Frostwind protested.

"No, she can't." Streamlight deadpanned. "If she leads, they'll think that she's trying to take over and put SummerClan in charge, mainly because she'll choose a SummerClan deputy. We'll have to dominate WinterClan and AutumnClan... I mean, AutumnClan isn't really a Clan anymore... But that will explain why one of their cats aren't in charge. But if you become leader, you have to make me deputy. You understand that, right?"

Frostwind kind of did. "To show it's one SummerClan cat and one SpringClan cat. The Clans are united."

"Precisely," Streamlight said. "And that isn't going to work if... Well, if Amberfrost wants to lead."

"Alright, Streamlight," Frostwind said, sighing. "I'll talk to Amberfrost. But no promises."

**Word count: 1440**

A shorter chapter, I know. Mainly I want to apologize in not updating for like, two months. I'm so freaking sorry. I've had no inspiration, and I still don't really, but I'm going to reread this book. I'm going to try to make improvements if I can. And I'm going to finish it.

I promised I would finish it, and I'm not going to break that promise. frostwind is my favorite Oc and one of my first, and my account is literally based on her. Her story... scattered and chaotic as it is... Must be completed.

so I promise you I'm not going to discontinue this. Ever.

I'm going to finish it or die trying..

# Chapter Thirty

"Hey, Amberfrost, can I talk to you?" Frostwind asked the next morning. She'd been too tired that night and had almost forgotten to ask Pebblepaw how she'd found the gathering. She wasn't a very good parent, she knew, but she was more of the killing-enemies type, not the parenting type, and Pebblepaw sort of understood.

"Sure?" the deputy flicked her tail and sent out the dawn patrol before glancing at Frostwind, a question in her eyes.

"Do you... Know about the prophecy?" Frostwind asked slowly.

Amberfrost tilted her head, looked around at the vicinity, and nodded. There weren't any cats around.

"Okay, I'm the snow white cat," she began. Amberfrost smiled.

"I figured as much," the deputy responded lightly.

"Yeah, um. We need to save the Clans by uniting them, and... Well, the ideal would be a SummerClan leader and a SpringClan deputy, because we're going to end up dominating Mousestar and WinterClan."

"You want me to lead?" Amberfrost's eyes widened.

"What? Um, well... Do you... Want to?" Frostwind practically squeaked. Why couldn't this have been fighting? She was so much better at fighting. She watched Amberfrost apprehensively while the deputy considered for a moment.

"You're meant to lead, aren't you?" Amberfrost asked, and she sounded amused more than anything.

"Well, yes," Frostwind mumbled, looking at her paws, "but you're deputy, so I thought, I needed your cooperation, and if that means you leading, that's fine."

"No, I don't want to lead," Amberfrost said unexpectedly. Frostwind frowned. She had always found Amberfrost as a strong-willed cat, and she was one of the senior warriors, older than Stonestar by a few moons.

"You don't?" Frostwind asked, shocked.

"Why do you think they haven't rebelled yet?" Amberfrost looked up at the sky, sighing. "I'm not meant to be leader, Frostwind. You are. You just need to mature a little more. Stop killing mindlessly."

"I was getting there," Frostwind muttered despondently, "until somebody killed my mate."

"I understand you have a grudge against AutumnClan, against Mousestar," Amberfrost stated calmly. "But in the final battle, we are not going to kill all the WinterClan cats, you hear me? We are not going to-"

"FIRE! FIRE!"

"Fire?" Frostwind jumped to her paws. "Where's Pebblepaw?"

"Medicine den," Amberfrost barked, "and evacuate everyone, not just your daughter, please!"

"Sorry!" Frostwind shouted in response and took off like the wind.

She shook Pebblepaw awake and explained there was a fire. "Evacuate to the river," she told her daughter.

"What about you?" Pebblepaw asked, concerned.

"I'll be evacuating the others."

"I want to help!"

"No, I can't put you in danger, hurry up and go to the river before I make you!" Frostwind unsheathed her claws and, terrified, Pebblepaw pelted towards the river.

Frostwind sheathed her claws again and moved on to the elders.

Some warriors were trying to help. She recognized Shimmerpelt, Twilightmoon and Talonflame, but they weren't going to be much good there. Shimmerpelt was impatient and Talonflame was quite small for a cat. They were struggling with the weights of the elders.

"Out of the way!" Frostwind snarled at them and the three of them jumped back. "Talonflame, I want you to go to the river. You can't help here. Twilightmoon..."

"I have to help!" Twilightmoon meowed, terrified. "Petalsnow is my mother!"

"Alright, fine, take Petalsnow," Frostwind grumbled. Technically, Twilightmoon was more senior than she was, and she was like, twice or thrice her age, but that just meant the age gap between her and Cloudbeam was hilarious. Shimmerpelt looked uncertainly at Smalltail and Squirrelwhisker.

"Leave me," Squirrelwhisker whispered. "I have lived a good, long life."

"Are you sure, Squirrelwhisker? Do you want to die here, to a fire?" Frostwind asked quietly. "We can get you out."

"You are a noble cat, Frostwind, but I can barely move from age," Squirrelwhisker rasped. "You won't be able to get me out. Smalltail, on the other hand... He was deputy to Summerstar. He was a very, very wise cat."

"Still am!" Smalltail called back.

"Take Smalltail, leave me," Squirrelwhisker whispered.

Frostwind made up her mind. "Take Smalltail," she told Shimmerpelt, and the silvery she-cat instantly supported the former deputy away towards the river. "Get on," Frostwind told Squirrelwhisker. She bent down.

"You can leave-"

"Squirrelwhisker, get on! Either you do or we're dying here together."

Was that a small smile on Squirrelwhisker's mouth? The ancient elder crawled on to Frostwind's back and Frostwind dashed towards the river at the edge of their territory. The fire hadn't reached there yet, but it engulfed their camp.

So why was the area before their camp still... Untouched?

Someone set the fire. The dawning realization struck her. Someone set the fire, trying to kill them.

And who?

Flamewing.

Of course.

She set Squirrelwhisker down with the others and stood up straight, before dashing away.

"Wait! Frostwind! The fire!" Windecho called after her, but she didn't hear him. She was Frostwind, a warrior of SummerClan, and she would kill all who threatened her Clanmates.

Flamewing hadn't gone far and was about to cross over the WinterClan border when she tackled him and pinned him to the ground.

"Care to explain?" Frostwind snarled.

Flamewing writhed beneath her paws, his dark eyes fearful, but his eyes were also full of malice, anger matching her own.

"That was for Turtleleaf," he spat, his tail swishing back and forth angrily.

"You are so, so stupid." Frostwind shoved him harder into the earth. "Don't you remember what I do to my enemies?"

Anger sparked in his eyes. "You kill them! Of course you do, you savage monster!"

"And Turtleleaf reawakened that monster by killing Skyfeather. I

was getting better, you know. More passive. But not anymore."

"Kill me, then," Flamewing challenged. "Like you killed her!"

"Oh, no, thank you," Frostwind hissed. "I killed Turtleleaf far more quickly than she deserved. I want to watch you burn."

And she tossed him into the flames.

Flamewing screamed as he was burned, over and over, and he tried to escape but he was too far in, but he finally made it out alive, charred and blackened, weak.

He has inhaled too much smoke, and had been burned too badly, and Frostwind sat next to him, watching him as he coughed and coughed and finally fell still.

Another enemy dead.

This would make war between SummerClan and WinterClan, but it had to happen eventually, and he did create that fire. Thankfully it hadn't harmed much of the territory and it rained right after. Frostwind went to inspect the camp and found everyone looking for her.

"Um, what?" she asked as she entered the camp.

"Frostwind!" Pebblepaw dashed to her and nearly bowled her over. "Windecho said you'd ran back to the fire!"

"Which was very stupid," Windecho said dryly.

"I can't have my death being too boring, can I?" Frostwind asked easily, licking her daughter's ears affectionately.

"Ew, stop that, I already washed. Um, why do you smell like smoke?" Pebblepaw inspected Frostwind suspiciously.

"I killed Flamewing," she muttered. "He set the fire. I let him get burned by it."

"Frostwind," Stonestar clucked disapprovingly. "You are my

bodyguard, and you aren't meant to do that."

"For a first," she whirled on him, "I am not your bodyguard. For a second, do you seriously think anyone here cares about you?"

"What?" Stonestar hissed.

"It's true." Branchclaw stepped up. "You're a weak leader. I support Amberfrost."

"So do I," Windecho stood next to him. "Amberfrost doesn't want to lead, but she's wise and she knows who our next leader should be."

"Frostwind," Amberfrost whispered, her voice radiating out.

"Frostwind! Frostwind!"

Hickorysnarl joined in, smiling at her former mentor.

Every cat was chanting except Stonestar.

"You'll have to kill me to get my position! I'm siding with Mousestar!" Then he jumped off the High rock and fled to AutumnClan territory.

"What do we do about him, Frostwind?" Amberfrost asked quietly.

"I can't get my lives," Frostwind said, "but I'm appointing you as temporary deputy. Eventually, I'll need to choose Streamlight, when we unite."

"Unite?" Every cat looked at the other.

"Yes. SeasonClan is meant to be as a whole, not split into four Clans. We are SeasonClan, or one part of it. We stand divided, but someday we shall unite."

**Word count: 1297**

**Okay, um, so yeah, the chapters are getting shorter, but I'm not really used to writing two thousand words anymore. And I think this book is drawing to an end, anyway. Why did**

**I abandoned it at the endgame?? I don't remember. Oh yeah, no inspiration. But anyway, I shall complete it!!**

# Chapter Thirty-one

Frostwind's own words rang in her ears. They were going to unite, not because of the prophecy, but because they had to.

Wars over borders and hunting rights were pointless when they could just be a big, peaceful Clan, and any cat could hunt anywhere. They would have larger numbers to fight off rogues, and four territories to hunt in during leaf-bare.

WinterClan wouldn't have to starve because of lack of fish, they could eat forest prey, or moor prey. And while Frostwind hated the idea of eating fish, it was true that there was fish every moon, and never ran out. There was even fish in winter, even if the ice was there and prevented them from catching it.

All in all... She could do something, make all this right. She could unite SeasonClan and make it whole again. If was her destiny.

She remembered demanding that maybe the destiny wasn't hers, fighting against Honeyleaf who wanted her to be a medicine cat. Poor Honeyleaf. Frostwind hadn't hated her, and the old she-cat had died anyway.

The main problem was Stonestar. They were lucky he'd chosen to run away to Mousestar, but if he'd fled the territories and become a kittypet or something, they would've never been able to track him down. Would Frostwind get her lives then, if Stonestar still breathed?

She suppressed a meow of amusement when she imagined Stonestar with Twolegs, dying and coming back to life, leaving the Twolegs awestruck and panic-stricken, with no clue what had happened.

But her smile faded off her face immediately because there was no reason why she should smile. Skyfeather was dead and it was a catastrophe. They needed to unite soon. Mousestar's Clan was literally becoming rogues only!

"Frostwind?" Amberfrost's quiet mew came.

"Come in," Frostwind meowed, looking around her. She was still unused to sleeping in the leader's den. Would they use SummerClan's camp later, or build another camp in the center of all four territories? But they were split by Thunderpaths. That wouldn't be practical.

"What are we going to do once we unite, assuming we can get past that obstacle?" Amberfrost asked quietly. "Some cats won't want to leave their homeland, Frostwind."

"What did SeasonClan do before?" Frostwind asked.

"I don't know," Amberfrost muttered, looking away. "I was born to Lunarfur and Grassfeather after the Great Divide, which is what we call the split."

"So you're saying Grassfeather knows?" Frostwind asked, perking up. Amberfrost's father was probably old enough and... Wait. Hopeheart's parents were Lunarfur and Grassfeather too. "Wait, hang on, are you my aunt?" She peered at Amberfrost through suspiciously narrowed eyes.

Amberfrost laughed. "Maybe I am, but is that a bad thing?"

She was so... Confident. Amberfrost was a natural leader, in all ways but the fact that she didn't want to be one.

"Even when I appoint Streamlight deputy," Frostwind meowed, "I'll still go to you for advice. Streamlight and I are relatively new warriors, we can't lead the Clan on our own."

"Precisely," Amberfrost purred. "You see, you are growing in wisdom already."

"Oh, I don't know," Frostwind purred back, "I can still be very immature!"

"Oh, don't you dare," Amberfrost growled, "the Clan needs a mature, wise leader!"

Frostwind laughed and laughed and laughed, and some of her worries bled away into the dark night, its calm flooding her with peace and tranquility.

She fell asleep alone in her den that night, and though she shivered from the cold, she knew she and her entire Clan were united with the desire of becoming whole.

And her Clan didn't end with the borders of SummerClan.

~

Birds chirped and the sun rose in the far horizon. Frostwind yawned as she got up, jumping up and looking round. Had Amberfrost assigned her to any patrols yet?

Oh, right. She was leader. That... Was going to take some getting used to. A lot of getting used to, actually. A lot a lot.

"Frostwind!" Shininglight called.

"Yes?" Frostwind asked. She hated answering every cat's call, but she was leader now, she supposed, just a leader without nine lives. And she couldn't be as lazy as Stonestar was or she'd lose all her support. At least everyone knew she was a formidable fighter and could protect them from any threat.

"I think it's time Firepaw became a warrior, Frostwind," Shininglight meowed respectfully, dipping her head to Frostwind.

That was pretty weird. Shininglight was at least twelve moons older than Frostwind, and having a cat older than her, well, bowing in a sort was just awkward, but Frostwind nodded her head respectfully back, hoping that was appropriate.

"It's a little early, don't you think?" Frostwind asked in spite of herself. She hadn't kept track of apprenticeships or anything, and she didn't even remember when they had been apprenticed, but Firepaw and Ivypaw had been kits at the same time as Pebblepaw, and she'd only been training for three moons.

Shininglight nodded, albeit a little awkwardly. "Yes, I do know that.

Firepaw has only been training for five moons, unfortunately. However, during the moons since his sister's death, he has been training rigorously, and I believe he is ready."

Oh... Right. Frostwind vaguely remembered Hickorysnarl mentioning something about Ivypaw dying on a patrol. How that had happened, she also didn't know. She probably needed to be more aware of things going on around her Clan, but she'd probably been too busy moping over Skyfeather to realize anything.

"You've given him the assessment?" Frostwind asked finally. Fine, Shininglight could have her way and make him a warrior early, but that didn't mean Frostwind was going to let him pass without a proper assessment.

"Not yet. I was waiting to see if you'd allow it first. No point getting his hopes up," Shininglight explained. Well, that did have reasoning behind it, she supposed. Passable.

"Alright. You can assess him, but don't go easy because he's only eleven moons old. The assessment should have equal difficulty," Frostwind told her. She expected Shininglight to hiss in annoyance and proclaim that she'd always been going to do that, but the silver she-cat only nodded in acceptance and left Frostwind's den with a soft word of thanks.

Feeling disgruntled, Frostwind exited her den. No one looked shocked to see her walking around camp, but her next request of them might be a little bigger.

Frostwind jumped on top of the High Rock. "Let all cats old enough to hunt gather below the High Rock for a Clan meeting!"

The cats gathered around her, tripping over their own paws in anticipation.

"Are we fighting?" Windecho yowled, and Frostwind let out an amused purr. He was the violent type, wasn't he. Too bad.

"No, we are not. I want a small patrol to go with me to SpringClan. There are some things I must discuss with Streamlight and

Springstar. Any volunteers?" She looked around, waiting expectantly. She wasn't like Stonestar and wasn't going to force anything on anybody. If she had to go alone, she would.

"I'll go." Dawnfire stepped forward.

Frostwind hadn't talked to Dawnfire recently so she was surprised the she-cat had agreed to go at all, but nodded in thanks. Dawnfire was strong-willed and powerful, and she'd be able to keep Frostwind and the rest of the patrol safe should there be any danger, although honestly, Frostwind could probably handle any threat herself.

"So will I," Hickorysnarl stepped up, flashing a grin at her former mentor. Wasn't it improper to grin at your leader like that? Frostwind didn't know.

"Me too," Windecho offered.

"Very well. Four cats are enough." Frostwind leapt off the High Rock and motioned with her tail for the three cats to follow her.

Hopefully, she'd be able to get some things done in SpringClan.

**Word count**: **1253**

Okay, um, all the chapters are probably going to average this length now. I almost ended it at 583 words because it was a really good place to end, but I thought that was a little too short? Anyway - here's your chapter! I'm going to wrap this up soon, and I'm into writing it again, haha! Or maybe I shouldn't say that. Every time I do, I don't update for weeks. But whatever!

# Chapter Thirty-two

Frostwind, Dawnfire, Hickorysnarl and Windecho set off for the SpringClan camp with a skip in their step. If Frostwind could just talk to Streamlight, she could probably-

Wait. What was that?

Something red glinted in the corner of Frostwind's vision. Blood. It was blood. And it reeked of WinterClan, although the blood itself was SpringClan.

"Frostwind?" Dawnfire meowed quietly. "Something's wrong."

"You think I don't know that?" Frostwind snapped, lashing out. Did Dawnfire think she was blind?

"No. Not that. What I mean is... Streamlight, she... She never fulfilled her destiny, to bring peace."

"What are you talking abou-"

Frostwind parted the ferns to find Dawnfire staring at Streamlight's dead body. She was the one who was bleeding. She'd tried to get to SummerClan territory to ask SummerClan for help, but clearly, she'd failed.

"Faster," Frostwind meowed. "Windecho, go back for more cats."

"I want to fight!"

"Windecho!" Frostwind snarled. "You're not a tiny apprentice, alright! We don't have time to argue! Now go back and get more warriors!"

His eyes frightened, Windecho jumped away. Frostwind seethed, staring at her friend's dead body.

"Meanwhile," she hissed, "I'll see if I can level this battlefield by myself. Hickorysnarl, Dawnfire, with me!"

They ran to the SpringClan camp as fast as their paws would carry them. Frostwind was at their head, her paws skimming over the undergrowth, her jaw set in determination.

It was a bloodbath.

WinterClan was attacking SpringClan with all the ferocity they were capable of, and they were butchering them. SpringClan was the most peaceful out of the four, and while they learned to fight, they hadn't been in any real battles, not until today.

Frostwind shouted at Snowstar to stop, but the WinterClan leader was merciless. Well, her problem. Frostwind leapt on top of the snow white she-cat, wrenching her off the frail from of Springstar. The SpringClan leader was old, and no match for Snowstar, and she shivered.

Snowstar shouted furiously, launching herself at Frostwind only to be rebuffed time and time again. Frostwind had to give her credit, she was stronger than any other cat she'd fought. But she was still no match for her, and Frostwind killed her once before jumping to attack the cat fighting the SpringClan deputy.

Too late. Violetflower collapsed to the ground in a pool of blood and lay still. SpringClan's deputy was down. Frostwind spared Violetflower one glance full of respect before turning to her killer.

It was the WinterClan deputy, Blizzardleap. He was angry that she'd pushed him away from his quarry, but he also seemed glad that at least Violetflower had died. Blizzardleap was as heartless as the rest of his Clan. Frostwind bared her teeth at the tom in disgust. He killed without reason.

She killed, too, but only to defend those she loved. SpringClan had never once attacked anyone, and yet Snowstar had commanded they attack anyway, and he hadn't objected. He'd been triumphant when he'd killed their deputy.

She was going to wipe that smile off his face.

"Get off him!" someone shrieked, and Frostwind turned to see a pale gray she-cat who looked just like Blizzardleap launch herself at Frostwind.

Frostwind dodged, slashing her claws at the she-cat.

"Moonwisp, stop!" Blizzardleap cried, terrified.

He had been weakened from his fight with Violetflower and his leg gave out underneath him. He couldn't walk, and yet the pale gray she-cat defended him with her life. Frostwind fought her without much thought or grace. Was she his kin?

And then Moonwisp was dead at her claws, her gray fur stained with blood. Another enemy down. Another step closer to fully dominating WinterClan and uniting SeasonClan.

But she needed these cats alive, not dead. The only cats she needed dead were Blizzardleap and Snowstar.

"You killed her," Blizzardleap choked out.

"She attacked me first," Frostwind responded evenly. "Who was she?"

Blizzardleap was dying, he could see that, so he didn't bother attacking Frostwind. "She was my daughter," Blizzardleap rasped. He looked around the battlefield. SpringClan was winning now, pushing back the WinterClan cats. It was a struggle, but they'd gained the upper paw.

"What is the meaning of this, Blizzardleap?" Frostwind asked quietly. "Why did you attack SpringClan? They have never meant you ill."

"They want us to unite." His voice was starting to sound weaker. "And Snowstar said no. She's a powerful cat, Frostwind, and... Well, she doesn't want to give up her leadership." He let out a weak laugh. "This was all a mistake, wasn't it?"

"Yes," Frostwind murmured, "it was. Now you see that?"

"She is my leader," Blizzardleap rasped. "I'd follow her to my death." He blinked twice. "I have, haven't I?"

"You're not a bad cat, Blizzardleap," Frostwind meowed quietly. "I know you're not. But the good cats can be corrupted."

"Snowstar is a good cat," Blizzardleap promised. "But she was corrupted by Mousestar and her own desire to lead." He swallowed painfully. "If you want to unite... You're going to have to kill her."

"I know." Frostwind meowed.

"It's not easy, is it?" Blizzardleap stretched his eyes to the horizon as he took his dying breaths. "Trying to make a difference."

"No," Frostwind meowed, "but that doesn't mean he shouldn't try."

He managed a weak nod before breathing his last.

The last of WinterClan had fled back to their territory. Unfortunately, that included Snowstar. Frostwind could probably have killed her, but she felt right, sitting there with Blizzardleap. He might have gone to the Dark Forest, but she hoped she'd let him go to StarClan.

Windecho burst in with a patrol and scowled when he saw nothing. "No fight?" he grumbled disappointedly.

"There will be a final battle," Frostwind meowed, "and I promise you, you will be in it."

"A final battle, huh?" Windecho grinned. "Alright. I'll wait for that."

"We will help you bury your dead," Frostwind's voice rang out.

"Our leader and deputy are dead!" one of the SpringClan cats wailed.

It was Mottledpelt. "They killed her, too. Fawn-" He choked on his own words, and Frostwind understood. They'd killed SpringClan's

other medicine cat, his former apprentice.

Redleaf had come to help, and her paws worked with expertise as she treated the wounded.

"You have no leader and no deputy," Frostwind meowed. "I am the leader of SummerClan in Stonestar's absence, and I will recreate SeasonClan. Do you swear loyalty to SeasonClan?"

The collective warriors looked at each other. Then, solemnly, they turned to face her and said with one voice, "We do."

"Then you are in my Clan now, under my protection." Frostwind looked around. "When we are ready, I will move you all to SummerClan's camp. Your territory will be shared with us, and ours with you. I'm going back to SummerClan now." She looked around at the warriors Windecho had brought. "Windecho, Talonflame, and Twilightmoon, stay here and guard the camp. Firepaw, Shininglight, Dewfrost and Brightflame, I want you to hunt some prey. Redleaf and Mottledpelt, treat the injured."

"I'll need to get more herbs," Redleaf put in.

"In that case... Do you want someone to help collect herbs for you?" Frostwind asked.

"Yes. Maybe an apprentice?" Redleaf asked hopefully. "You can send Pebblepaw over."

Frostwind bit her lip. She'd rather not send Pebblepaw to a possible warzone. "You can have Firepaw. Dawnfire, are you alright to go hunting instead?"

The bright orange she-cat jumped to her paws, nodding determinedly.

"I'll do everything I can to help!" she promised. She was ambitious indeed.

Actually... If not Amberfrost, Dawnfire might make a good deputy. But Frostwind would try to appoint a SpringClan cat, although she hardly knew anyone.

"Oh! Um..." Shininglight rushed over. "Frostwind, Firepaw passed his assessment, maybe you could..."

Frostwind nodded. "Very well. Cats of SeasonClan!" She jumped onto the tallest tree in the center of SpringClan's camp. The TallTree, apparently. "Today we will witness SeasonClan's first ever warrior ceremony!"

She hadn't said the words right, but everyone gathered beneath the TallTree anyway.

"Firepaw, step forward."

Firepaw was practically glowing as he ran over.

"I call the spirits of StarClan to look down upon this apprentice. Shininglight, do you believe he is ready to become a warrior?"

"I do," Shininglight meowed, looking proud.

"Firepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and defend SeasonClan, even at the cost of your life?"

"I do!" There was certainty in Firepaw's voice.

"Then by the power of StarClan I give you your warrior name. Firepaw, from this moment onwards, you will be known as Firespark. StarClan honors your courage and determination, and we welcome you as a full warrior of SeasonClan!"

"Firespark! Firespark! Firespark!"

And as Frostwind mirrored Firespark in gazing towards the stars, she knew they were one step closer to victory.

**Word count: 1388**

**Oh my gosh, I had so, so much fun writing this chapter! I'm trying to get Frostwind to mature a little more, man it is difficult, lol, because she's been killing for as long as I can remember! I do need to make my good characters a little more, well, good, I guess. Actually, I was originally going to name Firespark Fireshadow, but I decided against**

**it. I thought Fireshadow sounded cool but it doesn't really match his personality, don't worry, he doesn't really have much of a personality haha, since he's such a side character, so I just thought I'd save the cooler name for someone else!**

**Also, I'm not sure if you know, you probably don't, but the reason Mottledpelt's apprentice, well, former apprentice died was because I legitimately forgot her name, haha! That's why he stuttered. I know she was Fawnpaw according to the original allegiances, but it's been so, so long that I don't remember what her name became anymore! I'm certain I made her up at some point and then forgot about her. I'm a very forgetful author.**

Well that's all for now, thanks a lot for reading!!

# Chapter Thirty-three

"Frostwind!"

"Yes?" Frostwind whipped around, facing Amberfrost.

"The SpringClan cats. They want you to get your nine lives."

Frostwind had actually been thinking about that recently, but she shook her head. "No. I will not be the true leader of SeasonClan until I have united all the Clans."

"Frostwind... They need faith, and someone to put their trust in. That's you. But they'd feel safer if you had nine lives." Amberfrost's eyes were pleading.

"I can fight well enough with one life," Frostwind said, and sighed. "You don't understand. Amberfrost... Not everything depends on StarClan."

"What are you talking about?" Amberfrost demanded.

"Streamlight had a destiny, but StarClan couldn't help her to fulfill it. I want to trust StarClan, and I do, but we cannot depend on our ancestors. They cannot impact today unless we allow them to. You get it?" Frostwind glanced at her deputy.

Amberfrost stared back, clearly struggling to process what Frostwind had just told her, before eventually nodding, albeit hesitantly.

"I have trusted StarClan my entire life," she mumbled. "Suddenly stopping doesn't..."

"I'm not saying not to trust StarClan," Frostwind clarified. "They're not evil, and we can still turn to them for advice, but we should not depend on them to decide our destinies. We decide our destinies. Where we want to end up. And I don't want to lead half of SeasonClan. I want to lead the whole Clan, united as one."

"And I will lead them beside you," Amberfrost promised. "If you want me to, of course."

"Yes," Frostwind promised. "When I become leader, I will name you my deputy. In fact, you already are."

Amberfrost smiled slightly. "Thank you, Frostwind. Seeing you up there, leading the Clan... It reminds me I was never meant to be there."

"You would be a good leader," Frostwind protested.

"But I don't want to be."

"I know," Frostwind meowed softly, "and that's what makes you a better one."

Amberfrost smiled again, a soft, hesitant smile. "Well. We're not waiting long, are we?"

"No," Frostwind said. "I'll work out a plan, then we attack."

"A plan?" Amberfrost raised her eyes. "We need one? Don't we just send you in and watch you single-pawedly destroy them?"

"Oh, maybe," Frostwind meowed, grinning as she flicked her tail.

Amberfrost exited Frostwind's den, leaving her alone to ponder.

She would have to kill Stonestar and Mousestar and Snowstar. If Snowstar had appointed a new deputy, she would have to kill that cat, too. Mousestar's deputy didn't matter. Whoever it was, he or she was a rogue.

"Frostwind! Someone is here to see you."

Who? Frostwind wondered, exiting the den and looking around.

It was like she'd stood before a pool of water.

A cat stood there, old but majestic, her fur sleek, shiny and snow-white, her eyes a deep violet.

Just like Frostwind's.

"I am Peaceheart," she murmured, "the sister of Summerstar, Autumnstar, Winterstar and Springstar. How far have they fallen, such that WinterClan is siding with AutumnClan?"

"Very far," Frostwind meowed, staring at the legendary she-cat in wonder.

Peaceheart caught her staring and purred. "I'm alive, yes. I don't have much time left, and my... My mate died seasons ago. But I am here to warn you of one thing."

"Yes?" Frostwind asked, a little too excitedly.

"Trust no cat."

"What... What are you talking about?" Frostwind asked quietly.

"Who did you leave behind at the SpringClan camp?" Peaceheart asked quietly.

"A lot of cats," Frostwind meowed, confused. "Dawnfire, Shininglight, Dewfrost, Brightflame, Firespark, Redleaf, Windecho, a couple of others and the recovering SpringClan cats."

"Do you really think he forgave you?" Peaceheart whispered. "He held a grudge for moons. Only to overcome it when you became powerful? Think twice, Frostwind. Think twice. Trust no cat."

The old she-cat departed after that, leaving Frostwind deep in thought. Finally, she stood up. "Cloudbeam? Talonflame? I want you with me, now."

"Where are we going?" Cloudbeam asked.

"SpringClan camp. I need to talk to Windecho."

~

"Frostwind? What are you doing here?" Windecho's voice had a slight edge to it, and he looked a little hostile.

And the SpringClan cats... She couldn't see them.

"Where are the SpringClan cats?" Frostwind asked quietly.

"In the dens."

"Take me," she meowed firmly.

Windecho glanced at her, confused, and then realization dawned on him. But he didn't say anything and led her to the medicine den. Mottledpelt and Redleaf were working on the injured.

And the SpringClan cats... They were looking to Windecho, not her.

"What happened here?" Frostwind asked, and she looked directly at Windecho. He wasn't worming his way out of this one.

He relented and stopped keeping up the facade. "You're a weak leader, Frostwind. You're a good superweapon, but not a leader. I can only trust you to fight and win. Leading? No. You're pretending to mature but you're transparent. You're a mouse-brain and a fox-heart, and it's time someone proper took over."

Frostwind snorted. "And that someone proper is you?"

One of the SpringClan cats stepped up uneasily. "He said you manipulated Streamlight."

"I did, did I? We're both in a prophecy that he isn't in. So we came together and talked about uniting SeasonClan. When would I have manipulated her?"

Uneasy looks continued spreading around the SpringClan cats, and Frostwind watched with satisfaction as Windecho began to panic.

"I didn't lie!" he spluttered, but they were turning their backs on him.

"Windecho, you-"

"Fine!" he shouted. "If you won't listen to me, I'm going to WinterClan!"

"Disloyal!" one of the SpringClan cats snarled, his hackles rising.

Frostwind grinned. Spectacular.

"I'm not! I'm proving a point!"

"By being disloyal," Talonflame said flatly, then glanced at his father.

Cloudbeam shifted uncomfortably, but his mate, Twilightmoon, walked up to him and they twined tails, giving him a new surge of courage.

"Leave, Windecho," Cloudbeam spat.

Frostwind fought down jealousy. She'd once had a cat to do that with her. Skyfeather. She missed him, more than she wanted to admit. She was used to working alone, to flying solo, but being without him was just...

Painful.

She turned to face Windecho and almost told him to leave again when he spun around, his tail slapping a SpringClan cat in the face and stormed away, bristling.

"You'll regret this when WinterClan wins the war!" he snarled.

"He thinks they'll win because of him?" Dawnfire snorted in derision, and Frostwind had to agree.

Although... She felt a twinge of sorrow. He was her family, and she'd thought their bond had been remade, but he had fooled her and Cloudbeam together. He had manipulated her. She should never have given him a second chance.

She'd tried being like Skyfeather and had paid the price for it.

So... Maybe, she should just stick to being herself. Paranoid. A killer. She felt sadness well up in her. She was never going to be the mother Pebblepaw deserved. Pebblepaw deserved someone who cared for her and looked after her. That cat wasn't Frostwind.

Frostwind loved her daughter but she could only protect her, not bond with her.

She was a killer and a monster. That was all she was good at.

At least she was good at something, though.

"Are the SpringClan cats well enough to travel?" Frostwind called.

"No!" Redleaf scrambled for more herbs. "It's been a day, Frostwind! Okay, some of them are. But that's it! Here, these three."

They were still a little ragged and patched up with cobwebs, but they stumbled to their paws.

"They're not done being treated yet, but they can get to our camp. Hawkfeather and Pebblepaw can continue treating them there," Redleaf explained.

"Alright. Cloudbeam, Talonflame, stay here; Dawnfire and Firespark, you can come back to camp. I'll send some other warriors to relieve the rest of the SummerClan warriors. No, SeasonClan warriors." Frostwind smiled with pride at the name.

"Frostwind?" Twilightmoon asked. "May I request to remain here with Cloudbeam, Talonflame and Redleaf?"

She wanted to stay with them, as a family. Frostwind could respect that, even if she'd never had a true family to rely on. No, she had Pebblepaw and Cloudbeam, at least. She gave Twilightmoon a nod and the she-cat beamed at her mate before bidding her sister goodbye.

Dawnfire and Firespark followed Frostwind back to camp, their pelts pricking with anticipation. "So, Windecho's a traitor," Dawnfire meowed warily. "Who next?"

"No one, I hope," Frostwind meowed, and she meant it.

"Yeah," Dawnfire muttered.

"Dawnfire-"

"It just seems weird, isn't it?" Dawnfire asked quietly. "Everyone had their families broken up, but my siblings are all alive. Duskcloud and Twilightmoon are fine. Healthy. But... I don't know if it'll stay that way."

"Of course it will," Frostwind meowed, baffled.

"But can you promise me that, Frostwind?" Dawnfire asked. "Can you promise me they won't die in battle?"

No. No, she couldn't.

"No, I can't," Frostwind murmured.

"You see? There. You can't promise me. They're going to die, I know they will. Duskcloud and Shimmerpelt and Twilightmoon and Cloudbeam because war divides families." Dawnfire took a deep breath. "Can't we do this differently, Frostwind? Can't we make a difference, change our ways? Can't we assassinate Mousestar and Stonestar and Snowstar and leave it like that?"

"Dawnfire..."

"We're cats, Frostwind. We're not monsters."

"I think you're mistaken," Frostwind meowed heavily. "I am a monster, and when you put a monster at your head, you have to become monsters to follow."

"No, we don't." Dawnfire met Frostwind's eyes. "We don't have to. We are who we want to be. You said it yourself, Frostwind! We can choose our own destinies. Cloudbeam told me you said that, and... I believe you, Frostwind, can inspire them. To be different. Not like me."

"No," Frostwind meowed with a small smile, "you've inspired me, Dawnfire."

Dawnfire shifted slightly. "I hope so. I just.... It's too much killing. Doesn't it do anything to you?"

"I hardly feel it anymore," Frostwind meowed quietly. Maybe

wistfully.

Dawnfire looked away, nodding. "Yeah, just... Keep it in mind. Killing isn't the only solution."

"Yeah. Yeah... I know."

**Word count: 1579**

**Whoa! Is this my THIRD chapter today?! Okay, I'm officially insane. Bye!**

# Chapter Thirty-four

Dawnfire was quiet for a while, but then she spoke up again. "Frostwind, I... I have a confession to make. I fell in love with a WinterClan cat."

"You did?" Frostwind asked. Forbidden love? Again? Like always? More problems?!!

"Yeah, I did," Dawnfire meowed quietly, in such a mournful voice that Frostwind felt bad her immediate thoughts were how problematic forbidden love would be.

Frostwind already had a feeling this mysterious love had died, but she didn't say anything. "Who did you fall in love with?"

Dawnfire lowered her eyes to the ground. "You killed Moonwisp today, remember?"

"Yeah... Moonwisp." Frostwind barely remembered the beautiful silvery she-cat who'd been bloodied at her claws. Moonwisp. She'd had a beautiful name that matched her looks.

"She was named in honor of her mother and her brother," Dawnfire meowed. "Her mother was Moongleam, and her brother was Wispflame. I fell in love with Wispflame. He was broken after the death of Moongleam, and we started talking, a little." Dawnfire looked at Frostwind, her eyes full of desperation. "Frostwind, right before the battle, Wispflame said he wanted to join SeasonClan. Well, SummerClan, but it's SeasonClan now. He said that even at the cost of his mother and father, and now they're dead."

Frostwind's thoughts drifted back to Blizzardleap and Moonwisp, both slain by her claws. She hadn't wanted to kill them. These days, she didn't want to kill anybody. But life was tough, and she had to be the toughest of them all to survive and thrive.

"Wispflame, huh?" Frostwind murmured. "Tell you what. The battle

between four Clans is coming soon, and when it happens, Wispflame chooses a side. He either fights his own Clanmates or he joins SeasonClan in the assault. I know it's not ideal, but it has to be this way."

Dawnfire's expression was mournful, but she nodded.

"Right."

They returned to camp and Frostwind went to her den. Someone had changed the moss. She didn't think her Clan had any more apprentices, but she saw Hickorysnarl nodding at her and resolved to thank her former apprentice later.

The Clan was organized and moving smoothly along even with the new additions of the SpringClan cats. In fact, they already seemed to be forming friendships, which made Frostwind smile as she witnessed it. The more they bonded, the more united the Clan would be. This was the endgame they were all working towards, and she could see it working.

She realized now that there was no use waiting until the SpringClan cats recovered. That could be moons, and what if WinterClan attacked first, further weakening them?

"SeasonClan!" she called, jumping onto the High Rock. "I want a vote."

Everyone gathered beneath the High Rock, eagerly awaiting instruction, their ears twitching in anticipation.

"Who wants to attack WinterClan now, raise your tails," Frostwind meowed. She looked around for Windecho raising his tail only to feel a pang of sadness. They were divided again. Several cats, possibly the majority, raised their tails. "Those who think we should wait till the injured recover, go to the left there."

It looked around half half, but Hawkfeather stepped forward. "Leaf-bare is approaching. If we want to attack, we should do it now, in autumn. I have herbs now. I won't have herbs later."

"Point taken," Frostwind meowed. "We attack now! Every able

bodied warrior, I want you gathered to my right."

There were quite a lot of them, all grinning like hooligans awaiting the battle of their lives. Frostwind herself jumped down to join them.

"Alright. Hawkfeather, we'll take you with us. Do you need help carrying herbs?"

"Yes, I'll need at least two warriors," Hawkfeather responded immediately. "Perhaps Honeybriar and Featherbreeze from the SpringClan cats."

A golden she-cat and a dark gray she-cat both stood up. They were still a little patched. Honeybriar looked excited while Featherbreeze looked a little disappointed, but all in all, they looked ready.

"Queens, kits and elders, I want you to go to the SpringClan camp," Frostwind meowed. "Twilightmoon, Talonflame and Cloudbeam will guard you; we can't spare any more warriors here. We will need to assault the AutumnClan camp and the WinterClan camp. We'll head to AutumnClan first. Remember, our targets are Stonestar and Mousestar. The rogues can escape if we can't track them down. Then we'll head to WinterClan. Our targets are Snowstar and whoever the deputy might b-"

"We also have to kill Wispflame!" one of the SpringClan cats spat, flexing her claws. "He killed my sister!"

Frostwind shared a glance with Dawnfire, and the bright orange she-cat looked panicky. "No, we will not. I killed Wispflame's father and sister yesterday. No revenge. Remember, these cats will eventually be part of the Clan."

The SpringClan warrior, whom Frostwind now recognized as Streamlight's sister, Berryshine, glared at Frostwind. "Aren't you mad that he killed Streamlight? He killed our prophecy cat!" Berryshine stomped her paws on the ground, agitated. "We have to kill him."

"No, we do not," Frostwind meowed. "He was likely just following

orders. We're not trying to kill anyone but the leaders."

"Pathetic," Berryshine hissed, but one of her Clanmates placed his tail on her back, and she calmed down, but still glared at Frostwind through slitted eyes.

"Do you want to remain behind, Berryshine? Because I will make you if you don't cooperate," Frostwind threatened. The tortoiseshell hissed furiously at Frostwind but finally relented, although she looked nothing but annoyed and angry.

"Very well. Honeybriar, Featherbreeze and Hawkfeather, I want you at the back of our group. Dewfrost and Squirreltail" - Frostwind gave her former mentor an apologetic look - "defend them." Dewfrost nodded, looking determined, while Squirreltail merely looked sour.

Frostwind almost added 'with your life', but that should've been obvious.

She suddenly remembered Dewfrost and Brightflame had killed Stormwind in a supposed training accident. Once again, she hadn't thought about Stormwind for moons, but her sworn sister was up there in the stars watching over them.

Help us, Stormwind. Hopeheart. Shadowflight, she thought, thinking of all her dead relatives.

She led the patrol into AutumnClan territory. They slaughtered the border patrol on their way in and followed prey scent back to camp. They hunted along the way and ate some AutumnClan prey, but the moor was open and they were easily spotted gorging on rabbits in AutumnClan territory.

"Hey!" one of the hunting patrols shouted. "You think you-"

"SeasonClan, attack!" Frostwind yowled.

AutumnClan territory was flooded with SeasonClan cats. Mousestar came out with Stonestar, and their fury was evident.

"You've ruined my Clan!" Stonestar spat, leaping onto Frostwind's

back. She twisted around and clawed him in the eyes, and he narrowly avoided being blinded.

"You destroyed the Clan by doing nothing!" she snarled, whirling around to stop an attack from Mousestar before kicking Stonestar into one of the AutumnClan cats. More like rogues.

"Who's your deputy now, huh, and why isn't he here to save you?" Frostwind taunted as Stonestar groaned.

"I don't need saving, you fox-heart!" Mousestar screamed, and attacked her with a whirlwind of claws, slashing in every possible direction.

What was the word for it? It was fun, and she exulted in the fight, even relishing the moment another rogue joined in and she got to absolutely destroy them.

Everywhere her claws slashed, blood splattered, and she killed Mousestar twice before pinning him to the ground to take a third.

"No... No, please!" he begged. "It's my last life..."

"You'll go quietly," Frostwind snarled, and slit his neck.

It was the quickest, most elegant attack she was capable of, and she leapt atop Stonestar, who was still groaning from his earlier fall. He was dazed, but his eyes were unbending steel. Where had this been when he'd lead SummerClan? He'd destroyed his birth Clan with his utter stupidity!

Then his eyes lit up and he sighed in relief, giving Frostwind a clear indication that something was about to happen. She leapt free of Stonestar just as Mousestar landed, claws unsheathed. Mousestar killed Stonestar and Stonestar fell to the ground, his tongue lolling out of his mouth, very much dead.

"You stupid, stupid cat!" Mousestar shook the dead body of his fallen ally. "I almost had her!"

"And I won't give you another chance," Frostwind hissed. He'd almost killed her! And she didn't have nine lives, not like he did.

But he'd only have thought to trick her on his second or third last life, right?

She ran at him, charging at full speed, her claws out and plunged them into his chest.

He screamed the day away, each cry growing shriller and shriller. He died once, twice, thrice to her claws. Was he cleverer than she'd thought? He struggled for a while longer before finally growing limp.

The AutumnClan cats, those scraggly rogues, turned and fled back to Twolegplace.

"Get lost," Frostwind snarled.

"Are Stonestar and Mousestar dead?" Amberfrost called, panting as she ran up to Frostwind. Her flank had a deep scratch, and Frostwind glanced at her, concerned.

"Maybe Hawkfeather should treat that. You don't have to join the attack on WinterClan," Frostwind meowed.

Amberfrost's eyes were ice. "But I want to," she meowed, and Frostwind knew not to argue.

"Everyone too injured to continue, remain here," Frostwind meowed.

"We shouldn't have left Pebblepaw to go to the SpringClan camp," Hawkfeather muttered.

Frostwind felt a pang. Yes, it would've been smarter to have Pebblepaw here on the battlefield, but...

A lean white form slid out of the bushes, gray paws and tail-tip shivering.

"Pebblepaw!" Frostwind gasped. Why had she come?

"I thought it wouldn't be enough..." Frostwind's daughter murmured.

Frostwind wrapped her tail around Pebblepaw, staring fiercely at the young she-cat. "I need you to follow orders, Pebblepaw. I won't have you die like Hollykit and Gleamkit."

"They weren't your fault," Pebblepaw's voice cracked.

"They were stillborns, of course they were my fault, I must've done something while expecting. I'm not letting anything happen to you too," Frostwind meowed.

"I'll stay with Hawkfeather, Featherbreeze and Honeybriar," Pebblepaw promised.

"I'll look after her," Featherbreeze promised Frostwind.

Frostwind glanced from Featherbreeze to Pebblepaw and sighed, finally nodding.

"Frostwind!" Amberfrost meowed, her voice sorrowful. "Duskcloud is dead."

Dawnfire made her way to the body of her brother together with Shimmerpelt, Hickorysnarl, and Hairypelt. Their brother had remained behind, probably had fled with the others.

Hickorysnarl looked around. "Where's Small..." Her eyes landed on the body of her brother some distance away. "Oh no, you..."

"He's gone," Shimmerpelt meowed. "He attacked me, Hickorysnarl. He sided with AutumnClan."

Frostwind didn't ask how it felt to have killed her own son. Shimmerpelt must've been fiercer than Frostwind gave her credit for.

"Regardless of loss, we must move on," she meowed firmly. "WinterClan is the last obstacle in our path to unity."

**Word count: 1724**

**Omg yes!! ALMOST done!! Almost finished!! I've been working on this for more than half a year my goodness!! And it's going to be done**

**soon. VERY soon, I promise you. Unless I get writer's block again. (I can practically hear Mist saying, "don't jinx it!")**

# Chapter Thirty-five

"You may lose your lives in this next fight," Frostwind meowed quietly, addressing the entire SeasonClan with sadness in her eyes. "WinterClan was trained as warriors, unlike the rogues that made up AutumnClan. If you want to back out now, I understand."

Firespark stepped forward boldly. "I swore to defend SeasonClan with my life," he stated. "What kind of warriors would I be to desert you now? No. Frostwind, I would follow you to the ends of the earth. My loyalty is with SeasonClan and always will be."

Frostwind looked proudly at the young tom. She should've spared him some more attention. He was prideful and bullheaded, but right now, that was good. He would learn to be calmer and make wiser decisions given time, and right now, being stubborn wasn't that bad. She needed every warrior she could possibly get. While she could level a battlefield on her own, she only had four paws and couldn't be everywhere at once. It would take time to win over a Clan, and in that time, innocent cats could die.

"Thank you, Firespark," Frostwind meowed warmly, and surveyed the rest of the Clan. "What say the rest of you? Will you stand with me?"

There were some fleeting looks of panic and uncertainty, but every wavering gaze hardened, every warrior taking a step forward with steely determination in their eyes.

"We will fight for SeasonClan!" they yowled with one voice.

"Then let's go and conquer WinterClan," Frostwind meowed.

The steady beat of paws drumming against the ground was music to Frostwind's ears. They were moving to conquer WinterClan, their will unbending steel, pure desire to unite overcoming any insecurities. They were standing there, one Clan.

And soon, they would be a whole.

Frostwind's only regret was that AutumnClan had been fully exterminated. She'd killed them early on, and now no AutumnClan blood would run in SeasonClan veins. But the descendants never had to know that. They would know that all four Clans joint as one and rules the forest, moor and river with determination and power.

Frostwind let Amberfrost lead the attack and fell behind to Dawnfire. "Dawnfire," she whispered, "Go ahead, before our group, and warn Wispflame. If he goes to his Clanmates, leave him. It doesn't matter if they're ready for us; they probably already noticed the ruckus in AutumnClan territory. I plan to give Wispflame a chance, although Berryshine would say otherwise."

"No," Dawnfire meowed, her eyes dark with anger.

"No what?" Frostwind asked, surprised.

"I'm not going to tell Wispflame." Dawnfire looked at her paws. "He killed Streamlight, Frostwind! I can't ever forgive him for that. Why would he do that? Streamlight was innocent, and she was so kind."

"Perhaps... Perhaps this is her destiny, Dawnfire." Frostwind took a deep breath. "We have to learn to forgive cats even if they've wronged us. That alone will keep the peace for generations beyond."

"I still love him, Frostwind," Dawnfire's voice cracked. "But after all he's done? I'm a stupid mouse-brain! Why do I still love him?"

"You won't hate him until you've heard his side of the story," Frostwind meowed quietly.

Dawnfire smiled. "When did you become so wise? I'm older than you! Alright, I'm going to find Wispflame. But... If he gets even a fox-length from a Clanmate, om out of there and coming back."

"You love him, not me," Frostwind said, amused. "I don't even know what he looks like. I'm not going to  convince you to give him a second chance. The choice is yours and yours only. Don't run away too fast. You'll regret it." Her expression turned pained. "Just like I

regret how little time I had with Skyfeather."

Dawnfire nodded sympathetically, then ran off deeper into WinterClan territory.

"Frostwind!" Amberfrost called after attempting to stop Dawnfire and failing. "Dawnfire-"

"It's alright," Frostwind meowed. "She knows what she's doing."

"Does she?" Amberfrost looked doubtful, but didn't question Frostwind further, instead returning to the front lines looking troubled.

Frostwind smiled wryly. Amberfrost loved Branchclaw, but she'd never had to fight for him the way Dawnfire had. Dawnfire would've had to fight to even be with Wispflame at all.

The SeasonClan patrol reached WinterClan unobstructed, but the WinterClan camp was empty.

Dawnfire's lifeless body lay in the center of the camp.

Beside it lay Wispflame's.

"What?" Berryshine snarled. "I didn't even get to claw his guts out! How dare he die before I could get here!"

"Berryshine," one of her Clanmates chided. Frostwind winced. It was Icepool. She'd been there when Frostwind fell into the river, and the older she-cat flashed her a knowing smile.

"Ugh! He killed my sister!" Berryshine spat, trembling on her paws.

But weren't Dawnfire and Wispflame's forbidden relationship supposed to bring peace? That Dawnfire forgiving Wispflame showed that Streamlight's role had been completed after all?

Wispflame... His eyes were glazed and empty, but there was life still fading from his eyes. And Dawnfire... That expression wasn't one of anger, it was one of love, sorrow, and shock, at the end.

Frostwind was almost certain that Dawnfire had forgiven her beloved mate for Streamlight's death at the very end.

Maybe SeasonClan stood a chance of uniting after all.

"You mange-pelts," someone hissed, and Frostwind whirled around to meet the strangled but piercing eyes of Snowstar. Her entire Clan stood behind her, queen, kits, elders and warriors alike.

Moonshine and Nightfall... They looked terrified. The Clan's medicine cats weren't prepared for battle, didn't want battle.

Well, too bad, because their leader seemed to be thirsting for battle with every fiber of her body. Frostwind emitted a delicate laugh, so unlike her usual self that Amberfrost started.

"We're no more mangy than yourself, Snowstar," Frostwind responded with amusement. If this leader was going to go out with insults, she'd show them she could do the same.

SeasonClan stood behind her, their pelts bristling, hopping from paw to paw in anticipation of a battle.

Then, from behind Snowstar stepped Frostwind's brother. Windecho looked almost triumphant as he gazed down at his sister. Frostwind had always been slightly shorter than him, and he should have towered over her, but the mere menace radiating from Frostwind seemed to counter his height. He really was puny by battle standards.

"Recognize him, Frostwind?" Snowstar hissed, her voice contempt and filled with satisfaction.

"Oh, right, he's a traitor from my Clan. Why?" Frostwind asked airily.

Snowstar looked surprised, but hid away her initial shock with mere amusement. "I thought you'd be more excited to see your long-lost brother."

"I thought you'd be more terrified to see enemy warriors in camp," Frostwind responded easily.

Snowstar blinked. "You're really not bothered by him or Dawnfire, are you?"

"Dawnfire and Wispflame are together in death, happier than they could ever be. I suspect once Streamlight formally forgives Wispflame in StarClan, that dispute will be behind them and Dawnfire can go back to loving him like before." Frostwind met the WinterClan leader head-on. She meant every word she spoke.

Snowstar laughed, too, a dry, fake laugh. "Well, I wonder what this brilliant and shiny SeasonClan is doing in my camp."

"Oh, nothing much," Frostwind responded. "Just surrender your leadership and we'll be on our way."

"Surrender my leadership?" Snowstar barked a laugh. "You talked to Blizzardleap before he died, Frostwind. Didn't he tell you anything?"

"He told me you were stubborn, and this isn't worth it," Frostwind meowed evenly. "Think about it, Snowstar. Blizzardleap, Moonwisp, Wispflame... You've destroyed a family, Snowstar."

"You killed Blizzardleap and Moonwisp," Snowstar hissed back, her eyes widening with barely controlled rage. Her claws sheathed and unsheathed, scratching the earth beneath her paws.

"Oh, but it was your battle," Frostwind answered coolly. She seemed to be coaxing Snowstar out of her shell.

"You chose to kill them, Frostwind."

"I chose to save my friends. There's a difference."

"I will join SeasonClan on one condition," Snowstar hissed, "that I get to lead it."

"Condition not granted," Frostwind said with a smile.

Snowstar wasn't pleased by that, and she glanced around at her warriors, flicking her tail. "Bring them to me."

Them? Frostwind wondered, and her heart stopped for a moment.

Hawkfeather and Pebblepaw, captured by the WinterClan cats, struggling against their captors. Pebblepaw frantically shook her head at Frostwind, as if trying to tell her that she wasn't worth it.

But a mother... A mother could never get her kit killed like that.

"Make one move, Frostwind," Snowstar hissed, "and she dies."

"It's alright, Frostwind! Mother! Listen to me," Pebblepaw begged. "Let them kill me. I'll be happy with Skyfeather in StarClan, I promise. The Clan is more important than me!"

"You're misunderstanding something, apprentice," Snowstar chortled, looking thoroughly amused by Pebblepaw's reaction. "A mother's love for her kit is not something to be underestimated. I'm sure Frostwind would sooner die than let anything happen to you. Am I right, Frostwind?"

"Let her go," Frostwind meowed quietly. "If you lay a claw on her, I will kill your entire Clan."

That sent enough of a message. Not to Snowstar, who merely scoffed, but to the warriors who were holding Hawkfeather and Pebblepaw captive.

Because they knew she could do it. Knew she would do it.

The warrior holding Pebblepaw dropped her.

Frostwind's daughter was too fast for the WinterClan warriors and sped over to the SeasonClan side before any cat could move a paw.

"Stormweaver, you idiot!" Snowstar snapped, glaring at the stormy gray tom who'd let her go. "Kill him," she ordered.

Stormweaver was shredded before Frostwind's very eyes.

She watched the WinterClan cats tear apart their own Clanmate mercilessly, watched Stormweaver's head lol back, his eyes losing life before he fell still.

"Who else dares defy me?" Snowstar growled. "I will rule,

SeasonClan. I will rule or die trying!"

"And I will rule by her side," Windecho echoed, his voice solemn but determined.

Frostwind snarled. "You won't live to tell the tale."

Snowstar smirked. "Really, now. I won't live... Or you won't live?"

**Word count: 1591**

**Ahhh, oh my goshhhhhh, I love this book sm!! It's got the best plot of any warriors story I've EVER written. Honestly I can see this getting finished in a week! NO- MIST, I'M NOT JINXING IT- anyway. Yes, I have school next week. Yes, next week I'm cutting my hair for the first time in my life and donating it to cancer patients. Yes, I'm having tryouts for a- Okay, shut up brain. Anyway I'm busy next week. Shush again, brain! Um. I'll TRY to finish it within the month! Not to ambitious, right? Maybe I'll resolve it in five, six chapters? Or it could be two. Or three. I really don't know! But I'll work on it as much as I can, I promise!**

# Chapter Thirty-six

"I think you're going to die," Frostwind responded, relaxed.

Snowstar's eyes glittered. "You really think so? WinterClan, attack!"

It was so, so much worse than she'd imagined.

Evidently, Mousestar's rogues had joined Snowstar in her fight. For every rogue Frostwind killed, it seemed that two would take their place, screaming battle cries, boring as they were and shouting away. They were all there, exulting in the fight, trying to slaughter the SeasonClan warriors.

And yet they held fast. SeasonClan's line never buckled, each warrior fighting for their livelihoods and family and Clan, their determination overshadowing the rogues' greed for territory and prey. Frostwind herself killed so many she wondered if she was going to lose herself to being a monster again.

Finally, when the battle quieted down, there were only two cats left on the WinterClan side. Hawkfeather had been freed sometime during the battle, and he and Pebblepaw were hurriedly tending to the wounds of the SeasonClan cats.

Moonshine and Nightfall had swapped sides, joining SeasonClan in treating the wounded. "I know when a battle is lost," Moonshine announced boldly, ignoring the snarling of her Clan leader.

Several WinterClan warriors had also changed their minds about their Clan, abandoning their leader and the one they called the SummerClan outsider to face off SeasonClan alone.

"Was it worth it, Windecho?" Frostwind asked, her voice soft as the wind, her purple eyes focused on her brother. "All the bloodshed? Over a stupid game?"

"It was worth every drop," he whispered back, his eyes malicious

and filled with glee. Then he threw back his head and cackled. "You thought this was over a game, Frostwind? How many times must I explain? I hate you. You became the star of the Clan just because you knew how to kill."

"Star of the Clan?" Frostwind hissed. "Everyone hated me!"

"Not Skyfeather, he didn't," Windecho snarled. "He loved you for some stupid, unfathomable reason, and he wanted to be with you. Not like his sister would ever want me."

"His... Sister?" Frostwind asked.

"Were you blind, Frostwind? Are you still blind? I loved Stormwind!" he spat.

Frostwind blinked, genuinely surprised. "You loved Stormwind? You hardly talked to her!"

"Because she was with you, you snivelling fox-heart! Because of you Stormwind never laid eyes on me, never considered what I might feel for her! And then she died, to traitorous cats you now shelter! Don't you care that they killed your supposedly sworn sister? Don't you care that Dewfrost and Brightflame are murderers?"

Frostwind let out a dry laugh. "I'm a murderer myself. And so are you, now. Don't you understand, Windecho? I took revenge, and all I did was lose more family. Skyfeather died because Turtleleaf wanted to hurt me."

"You should've killed her when you first saw her, Frostwind. You're soft that way. You wait until they're truly enemies. You wait until they're killed someone you love! What kind of attitude is that? I'm more ferocious than you. I might not have your flair for fighting, but I know when to take revenge, and I will act on it because you. Took. Everything. From. Me!" He was seething now, his fur spiky with fury. Frostwind resisted the urge to laugh. Did he think he was frightening, with his fur puffed up like that? He looked like one of those furballs she'd coughed up the other day. He wasn't a frightening warrior. He looked like a soft little kittypet!

"I'm changing, Windecho. Killing isn't the answer to everything. Haven't you tried that? How much did you lose?" Fear, anger and doubt flashed in Windecho's eyes, but he seemed to ignore his own feelings, flexing his claws at her.

Frostwind watched him carefully. He knew he could never win a fight against her even two-on-one with Snowstar, and she had all her Clanmates behind her. Why was he provoking her like that?

Unless he was distracting her. "Amberfrost, send two patrols to check on our Clanmates in SpringClan and AutumnClan."

"Finally figured it out, have you? Why do you think we had so few warriors?" Windecho asked.

"Few?" Frostwind snapped, glaring at the dead bodies strewn around the field. "So you mean you let them die as a distraction?"

Windecho stared with disgust at one of the fallen bodies. "You really think we'd use rogues, Frostwind? Rogues?"

She stared back, her eyes dark. They weren't Clan cats. They were rogues indeed, fierce, and... Well, pretty much unwanted to them. But that didn't mean their lives were expendable.

"You gave them false hope," she hissed, and found herself feeling sympathy for the poor rogues. They'd left their home areas thinking of the promise of prey and freedom, and they'd been slaughtered in an unplanned assault meant to have them killed.

What had Windecho done? He'd destroyed so many families, including his own.

"Where's Cloudbeam?" Windecho asked.

"What, going to order him around again?" Frostwind snarled at him.

"No... He... He wasn't hurt, was he?"

"Only internally. Your betrayal crushed him, Windecho. Your selfishness."

"He and I will live together under the rule of Snowstar," Windecho snapped. "He'll thank me later. Huge territory for a couple of cats? We'll never starve again!"

"And who will defend it, Windecho?" Frostwind whispered, her mew barely audible. "Once you've killed everyone - myself included - what will you do with all that territory? Leave it for rogues and loners? We can combine into one Clan, Windecho."

He stared at her for a moment and the snorted derisively. "Like you'd take me in, after how far I've come. You're just going to kill me and Snowstar once this is all over! Where is Cloudbeam?"

"In SpringClan camp," Frostwind responded evenly. "I hope you haven't sent a patrol to kill him."

Windecho was sweating visibly now, and looked at Snowstar, unsure.

She stood up, flicking her tail. "I never promised to protect your brother," she meowed calmly, "I just promised to spare him if I saw him. You ordered that patrol yourself. I am certainly not to blame."

"You're not going to stop it?" Windecho demanded, whirling on his paws to look pleadingly at Frostwind.

"He's my brother too. You think I don't care about him?" Frostwind snorted. "I've already sent a patrol. They'll arrive faster than I will. Besides, Cloudbeam isn't as weak as he used to be. Twilightmoon changed him, Windecho. He's stronger now. No thanks to you."

"I..."

"Becoming a weakling, Windecho?" Snowstar snarled. "No room for weakness."

"I can't let my brother be killed!"

"Then you aren't worthy to stand beside me after all."

"I - how dare you!"

Windecho leapt at Snowstar, claws unsheathed.

"Should we intervene?" Amberfrost asked uneasily, watching them fight with a hollow look in her eyes.

"No," Frostwind meowed. "I'd rather not spill any more blood. With any luck, they'll kill each other."

"Frostwind...?" one of the WinterClan cats who'd turned asked. "Snowstar has been leader since I was a kit. I know it isn't ideal, but I think maybe you could spare-?"

"Snowstar is evil. I don't know who she used to be. But this is who she is now, and that cat needs to be ended. For the good of the Clan."

"For the good of the Clan," SeasonClan echoed, and watched as Windecho shredded Snowstar.

**Word count: 1166**

**Okay, I did a lot of chapters this weekend. Five, maybe? Yeah. But after this I might rewrite Blazing Dawn and Swift As Lightning because the storyline is stupid. So, anyway, that's all for the weekend, I'm too tired to continue writing. Thanks bye!**

# Chapter Thirty-seven

"Windecho," Frostwind meowed calmly as her brother stepped away from Snowstar. Her body spasmed once and lay still for a short while, before the white she-cat breathed again.

"Traitor," Snowstar hissed, her claws unsheathed.

"Frostwind! I was using her. You believe me... Right?" Windecho asked. "Sister?"

Frostwind watched him for a moment, her eyes never leaving his, her gaze unwavering.

"No, I do not," she meowed firmly. "I'm not looking to be betrayed again."

"Frostwind. Frostwind, I promise I-"

"I don't care about your promises," she snapped. "You are worthless. You can't be trusted. And we are done. I should've never have called you my brother. But... Was it really about her, Windecho? All the fights, the ignoring, the taunts... Windecho, Stormwind wouldn't have wanted you to do that."

Windecho's expression was pained. "I've always wondered if Stormwind was named after me."

"Of course she wasn't," Frostwind snapped. Stormwind, named after her idiot of a brother?

"Stop talking now," Snowstar hissed. "Those who will follow me, join me now! WinterClan warriors, your time has come!"

One of the WinterClan cats stepped forward. It was Moonshine. "I was named in honor of the first Moonshine, the mother of Blizzardleap's kits. Moonwisp and Wispflame were left motherless because of a border dispute. We should be done fighting!"

The WinterClan cats looked at each other, and Snowstar's eyes landed on one cat. "Sparrowtail," she meowed calmly, "will you join me?"

"Who's Sparrowtail?" Frostwind hissed into Amberfrost's ear.

Her deputy rolled her eyes playfully and gestured with her tail to the dark orange tom who'd stiffened when Snowstar had addressed him. He looked uncomfortable, and glanced at a tan she-cat, who was heavily expecting.

"I don't know," Sparrowtail murmured.

"How can you say that?" the tan she-cat cried. "Choose me over her, Sparrowtail. You have to."

"Who's that and what relation does Sparrowtail have with Snowstar?" Frostwind muttered to Amberfrost. Again, her deputy gave her a playful eye roll.

"You don't know anything, do you?" Amberfrost whisper-laughed. "Sparrowtail is Snowstar's littermate."

"Oh." That made sense, actually. Although Frostwind had been thinking that he was a former love interest.

Sparrowtail glanced again at the tan she-cat, who was watching him almost haughtily, and finally turned back to his sister. Snowstar raised her eyebrows at him.

"Well?" she asked quietly. "Sweetstone? Ivywing? Pinewhisker? Any of you?" The tortoiseshell she-cat to Moonshine's right stiffened, her tail arched back. Frostwind guessed she must be Ivywing, and a quiet nod from Amberfrost confirmed her suspicion.

The other two, Sweetstone and Pinewhisker, seemed to be together. Sweetstone was a pale gray she-cat with a baby pink nose, and Pinewhisker was a reddish-brown tom with the same pink nose and matching amber eyes that made him look like Sweetstone's father.

Which probably meant that Ivywing and Pinewhisker were the parents of Snowstar, Sparrowtail and Sweetstone. They really liked

the letter S, didn't they.

"Make your choice, Sparrowtail," the tan she-cat meowed fiercely, "but if you choose her, I'm never speaking to you again."

"Quietstream, you can't do that to me, please," Sparrowtail begged.

The tan she-cat, supposedly Quietstream, looked upon her mate with disgust. "Then don't choose her."

Ivywing's eyes were full of sorrow as she approached Snowstar tentatively. "I love you, Snowstar. But what happened to my fierce and loyal Snowtail?"

"I am her!" Snowstar spat, but Ivywing was shaking her head and walking away.

"I won't join you, Snowstar," Ivywing meowed. "I love you and you're my daughter but I don't understand what happened to you."

"I stand by Ivywing's decision," Pinewhisker added, moving over to join his mate.

"Pathetic," Snowstar hissed. "Then again, you never had much of a personality. Always in my mother's shadow."

Sweetstone stiffened. "Don't talk about Pinewhisker that way! I'm done with you too, Snowstar."

"Siding with mommy and daddy again, as usual," Snowstar drawled, and she didn't even look panicked as her sister stalked away from her to join Ivywing and Pinewhisker.

That only left Sparrowtail, the very first one she'd asked. She'd probably known what she was doing questioning his loyalty, and Frostwind watched with anticipation. Sparrowtail or no Sparrowtail, Snowstar would still lose, but she wanted to see what would happen.

"Sparrowtail," Quietstream warned. But her expression looked sadder than angry, and she twined her tail with his and gave his tail a squeeze.

That was all it took. "No, Snowstar," Sparrowtail meowed. "You've changed too much. I don't recognize you. I thought I knew you, but... You just went and she'd away Snowtail, didn't you?"

"I am Snowtail!" Snowstar hissed at him, flexing her claws. "Looks like you'll just follow Quietstream everywhere, like you always did! Oh, Quietpaw. Isn't Quietstream so beautiful?" she mimicked Sparrowtail's voice.

"That's enough, Snowstar," Frostwind meowed. "It's time to die."

"Oh, not yet," Snowstar meowed, smirking. "Kill Windecho first."

Frostwind's eyes turned to her brother and they narrowed.

"Frostwind, no!" Pebblepaw cried. "She's goading you."

"Shut up," Snowstar whirled on Frostwind's daughter.

"Don't tell her to shut up," Frostwind responded.

"I'll do what I want, mouse-brain."

Frostwind laughed back. "You really think so?"

"I've got many more lives, what say you? You've got one! They're still calling you, Frostwind?"

"I'm not the leader yet," Frostwind responded easily.

Snowstar snarled. "Kill your brother and prove you're worthy of SeasonClan, and I will bow to you."

Frostwind flicked her tail to Amberfrost. "Kill him."

Windecho's eyes widened in panic. "You wouldn't! Frostwind! Sister! Please, no!"

"You don't get to beg when there are no scraps left," Frostwind snarled. "You left us for those scraps. Not my fault there weren't enough. Snowstar." She lifted her head to meet Snowstar's eyes. "You and me. To the final death."

"That's heroic," Snowstar smirked, "but I will absolutely destroy you."

"You've lost once already. Don't be cocky."

"You too," she responded.

"At me. One, two, three."

It was just like the last fight.

Snowstar's tactics hadn't changed. But Frostwind knew there would be extra tricks this time, so she attacked different places. One time, she slashed Snowstar across the nose, spraying blood, and the she-cat grunted in pain, before she dropped dead from blood loss.

She got up again a few seconds later, even more determined, and launched herself at Frostwind in an attack with newfound courage.

She pinned Frostwind to the ground. "You know what's unique about me?" she hissed. "I got my nine lives from the Dark Forest."

"And you know what's unique about me?" Frostwind asked. "I've never lost a fight."

She kicked Snowstar off her, backflipping back onto her paws and slashed open her enemy's belly. Snowstar's eyes glazed and she fell still.

This time, she came back terrified, and unless she was a really good actor, this was her last life. Frostwind walked up to her casually, deflecting an expertly aimed attack with her claws, and placed her claws against Snowstar's neck.

"Surrender," she whispered.

"Never," Snowstar snarled.

Frostwind pressed harder. Blood sprayed and Snowstar choked. Frostwind had gotten the windpipe pretty good.

"You - don't - understand," Snowstar gasped with her last mouthful

of breath. "The - Dark - Forest - will - defeat - you!" Then, she tried to inhale and couldn't, coughing so hard blood came out. Then she fell still for the final time.

"Snowstar is dead," Frostwind announced. "Bury the dead. Hawkfeather, Nightfall, Moonshine, tend the injured. Pebblepaw, let's pay a visit to the Moonstone. It's high time I met my ancestors."

**Word count: 1177**

**Aaaahhhhhh, just one or two more chapters and this will be done...!! I'm thinking maybe another one and an Epilogue 😓 I'm gonna miss this**

# Chapter Thirty-eight

"This is Mothermouth," Pebblepaw murmured, showing Frostwind the network of caves. "You've been here before, haven't you?"

"Unfortunately," Frostwind muttered. She hadn't remembered Mothermouth being particularly delightful, although she had seen her parents. Hopeheart and Shadowflight... Would they give her her nine lives?

Pebblepaw laughed. "You don't think I'll see my grandparents?"

"Oh, you will," Frostwind promised. "But only on my side. Lightningstrike is still alive, and I highly doubt you want to meet Silverlight. Alright, let's go in together."

Pebblepaw looked up at her mother with a beam and nuzzled her gently before escorting her into Mothermouth.

"And now you press your nose to the Moonstone," Pebblepaw meowed excitedly, watching Frostwind with anticipation.

"Not yet," Frostwind murmured, "I have one more ceremony to perform."

Pebblepaw giggled. "You can't perform your own leadership ceremony, Mom."

"Not that. Pebblepaw, step forward."

Pebblepaw took a step backwards instead, looking panicked. "I'm not ready!"

"I know you are," Frostwind soothed. "Pebblepaw, you are ready to become a full medicine cat. Do you promise to help your Clanmates and follow the medicine cat code?" She didn't know what the ceremony was supposed to be like, but it had to be along those lines, right?

"I do," Pebblepaw mumbled, her voice just a little shaky.

"Then by the power of StarClan, I give you your medicine cat name. Pebblepaw, from this moment onwards, you will be known as Pebblespots."

Pebblespots looked up, her expression delighted yet scared, and licked Frostwind's shoulder like a proper ceremony, her eyes wide with awe.

"Now for yours?" Pebblespots meowed, her voice surprisingly calm.

Frostwind glanced at her daughter, who was excited, determined and terrified at the same time, and gave her a confident nod.

She knelt down and pressed her nose against the Moonstone, letting StarClan guide her away.

Her eyes blinked open, and she was in a rotting, dying forest. She knew instantly that something was wrong. This couldn't be StarClan. She'd been to StarClan, and it had been paradise! Lush green forests, boundless prey...

Everything about this place just said dead.

What was worse... Pebblespots, who'd lay down at the same time as her, wasn't there.

Was this the Dark Forest? I knew it, she thought, finally understanding. I'm going to the Dark Forest.

That... Well, that wasn't very good.

"Remember me?" someone hissed in her ear, and she whipped around, claws out, slashing Snowstar across the muzzle. Blood sprayed.

Instead of attacking her, Snowstar took a step backwards, her eyes flashing with fear. "Don't you dare," she snarled.

"What happens if I kill you again, huh?" Frostwind snapped, her hackles rising. "What have you done with Pebblespots?"

"Nothing at all," Snowstar purred. "She made it to StarClan. But you, Frostwind... You belong with us. Don't you want to get your lives from the real cats like I did?"

"No, I don't," Frostwind snapped. "Even if StarClan are the fake cats, we've lived by their codes and followed their rules for a long time. We don't need to change now."

"Oh, but you will," Snowstar meowed. "You killed me. You owe me a debt."

"I do not," Frostwind hissed back at her. "Oh, not unless you want more scars?"

Snowstar tripped over herself scrambling backwards.

"Coward," a tortoiseshell she-cat breathed, and she slunk out of the dying forest, her pelt matted with blood that may or may not be her own.

"She killed me!" Snowstar defended herself.

The tortoiseshell she-cat made a face at her. "I wasn't scared of my killer. I hunted him and his family down and made sure each of them died in turn."

"Don't lay a claw on Pebblespots!" Frostwind hissed furiously, but didn't step forward. Whoever this tortoiseshell cat was, she was probably strong.

"She's protected by StarClan," the tortoiseshell she-cat meowed, disgusted. "But Cloudbeam isn't so fortunate."

"What do you want from me?" Frostwind hissed.

"We're missing something, aren't we? Introductions. I'm Shadewarren." The tortoiseshell cat met her eyes. "She's Snowtail, but you know that, don't you?"

Snowstar hissed. "Snowstar!"

Shadewarren lifted a claw. "To me, you're Snowtail."

Snowstar hissed again but didn't argue.

"Where is StarClan?" Frostwind meowed calmly.

"Nowhere and everywhere at the same time," Shadewarren answered.

"You hear me when I say this, Shadewarren. As long as I am alive, you will never lay a claw on me or my kin," Frostwind snarled.

"That can be arranged," Shadewarren meowed calmly.

Frostwind glared at her. Shadewarren was too calm, in a way Frostwind could never understand.

"Let me go," she meowed instead of lashing out.

"Very well," Shadewarren meowed. "But remember this - I will never forget your family line. You will die, you and all your kin, and their kin. I can't touch them while you breathe? Fine. Every cat dies eventually."

Then the Dark Forest faded from Frostwind's eyes, and she was in a lush green meadow. She breathed in the sweet scents of StarClan. Finally, she was away from the scent of death. But Shadewarren's words still haunted her.

"Frostwind! What happened?" Pebblespots ran up to her, eyes worried.

"I'll tell you later," Frostwind promised, although honestly, she had no intention of burdening Pebblespots with the words of Shadewarren.

"Well, come on, it's time for your ceremony!"

All the starry StarClan cats appeared, their pelts shimmering.

Frostwind winced. "You could use a change of decoration. Too many stars."

"We are StarClan," one of the cats at the front purred, and Frostwind

recognized Summerstar.

"I'll give you your first life." Summerstar strode forward and gave her a comforting smile. "You were quite the interesting kit."

"And an interesting warrior?"

"Of course. But we aren't here to chat." He turned serious. "With this life I give you strength. You are remarkable, but you break under pressure."

Frostwind gritted her teeth as the pain flowed through her, but this was nothing after the loss of Skyfeather. Where was he? Her eyes scanned the crowd.

But the next one to come was Hopeheart, her eyes filled with love. "Did you ever know that I killed the second AutumnClan leader, Fallingstar?" Hopeheart asked. "She was Fallingleaf, Autumnstar's daughter."

"Are you were I got this from?" Frostwind asked.

Hopeheart purred in response. "No. I don't think anyone could ever be quite as incredible as you." She took a deep breath. "With this life I give you love," she murmured, and warmth flower through Frostwind.

She didn't stay long, moving away to touch noses with a black tom before he came up to her.

Shadowflight was majestic, but his eyes were soft. "With this life I give you hope," he murmured.

Power surged through Frostwind. She could do anything, because she had hope. She met her father's eyes, but he said nothing more, only returning to his mate.

Next up came Moonwisp.

"Moonwisp," Frostwind meowed, her eyes pained. "I'm sorry."

"It's alright," Moonwisp meowed, and she really didn't sound angry.

"I'm happy here. With this life I give you certainty," she added, and a fourth life flowed through her, not as painful as the first, but still painful.

Moonwisp didn't stop to talk, which was fine since they hadn't known each other.

Next came Wispflame. He looked uncomfortable. "Thank you for giving me a chance and not letting Berryshine kill me first," he meowed. "With this life I give you mercy."

The fifth life was different from the others, and filled her with compassion.

"Wispflame," she managed, "are you..."

"Yes," he meowed, smiling. "I'm happy here, with Dawnfire."

Speaking of Dawnfire, she was the next cat who came forward, smiling. "With this life I give you trust," she meowed. Frostwind smiled as she received this life, even with the pain it brought. She'd trusted Dawnfire, and it had paid off, in a way.

Finally, the cats she wanted to see.

Skyfeather bounded over to touch muzzles with her, and she twined tails with him, soaking in his warmth.

"Hey! Daaaaaad! Stop it! I wanna see Mom too!" one of the kits beside him whined, and Skyfeather moved aside to show a pure black she-cat.

Frostwind's eyes widened. She had purple eyes. "Hollykit?" she murmured, and the black she-kit jumped up and down in excitement.

"I told you she'd know me!" she cried in excitement.

"Shut up," the ginger she-kit beside her mewed. "I bet she knows me, too."

"Manners, Gleamkit," Skyfeather chided, but Frostwind didn't care.

She bent down and licked both of her kits, and they pressed close to her.

"Wait! I'm first for this," Hollykit butted Gleamkit aside. "With this life... I... Dad! What was it again?"

"Hollykit!" Gleamkit meowed, rolling her eyes.

Skyfeather whispered something into Hollykit's ear.

Certainty crossed Hollykit's face, alongside some embarrassment. "With this life I give you faith," she mewed, pressing her tiny paws against Frostwind's.

Frostwind looked lovingly upon her daughter and barely even felt the pain of the new life.

Gleamkit shoved Hollykit off the ravine to tumble somewhere down below, and Skyfeather had to hare after her, looking panicked, but Gleamkit didn't look like she cared.

"Gleamkit," Frostwind chided.

"It doesn't hurt her," Gleamkit pointed out.

"Still."

Gleamkit shrugged. "Whatever. Oh! Right! The ceremony. With this life I give you humility. I hope you're not where Hollykit got all the sassyness from."

"Gleamkit," Summerstar interjected sternly.

"Just doing my job! Bye, Mom!" she called, before leaping over to Hopeheart.

Skyfeather struggled back up the ravine and plopped Hollykit down on the ground before padding over to Frostwind.

"With this life I give you determination," he meowed softly, and touched his muzzle gently to hers. She closed her eyes as his life came through her.

"The last life is mine to give." A dark brown tabby stalked forward. "I am Earthstar, the father of the four founders. And Peaceheart," he added as an afterthought.

"Is she here?" Frostwind asked.

"No, Peaceheart is not yet dead. However, Feathermist and Brightwing are here."

Earthstar walked over to her. "With this life I give you patience," he meowed. "I watched my children divide my Clan, and I waited generations for it to come back together."

"Springstar was still alive just before we united. It can't have been that long."

"I waited generations," he repeated, and stepped back.

"Froststar! Froststar! Froststar!"

Froststar looked around and smiled. Finally, she had fulfilled her destiny.

**Word count**: **1614**

OH MY FREAKING GOSH THIS STORY IS OVER!

I'm just writing an Epilogue after this, but I'm serious. It's DONE.

BYE!

# Epilogue

It's time.

Froststar looked over at her Clan for the final time, watching the apprentices look after the elders and the warriors entertain the kits. They'd never had to live with separation and border disputes, because they were one united Clan.

And it was time for her to leave them.

She had lived many seasons beyond what she should've lived, and as she coughed her last life away, she knew she could leave her Clan in the paws of Shadowwhisper.

Shadowwhisper was actually her kin, the son of Talonflame, named in honor of Shadowflight. She'd given him his warrior name Shadowwhisper because he was quiet but observed what was around him. He would be a strong leader.

He wouldn't be undefeatable like her - the only reason she'd lost her lives were to a fall and sickness - but he would still continue leading SeasonClan on into a time of greatness.

She'd never forget Shadewarren's promise to kill each of her kin, and her pelt prickled uneasily at the thought. But her immediate kin had passed seasons before. Pebblespots had lost her life to greencough, and before her Cloudbeam had fought a fox and died.

It was time to reunite with them, finally. She let out on last raspy breath before her body finally grew still.

She blinked her eyes open and there he was. She'd lived nine lifetimes without him and had never spent a day without thinking about him.

"Skyfeather!" she purred.

"Someone else is here," Skyfeather purred, "someone who is rather

annoyed that she didn't get to give you a life."

"Stormwind?" Frostar asked, looking round.

Her sworn sister purred and threw herself at Frostar, and they fell over together, laughing. Frostar was young again.

"They told me it was necessary for Moonwisp and Wispflame to give you lives, and Dawnfire," Stormwind meowed crossly. "And Summerstar. Stonestar went to the Dark Forest, and Sunstar didn't even come - but Earthstar said no! I almost strangled him!"

"She's telling the truth," Skyfeather informed Frostar wryly, but Frostar only purred.

She'd fulfilled her destiny and led SeasonClan faithfully for many seasons. Now, she could finally trail the stars with her beloved mate, sister and family.

**Word count: 351**

**AAAAHHHHHHH, OH MY GOSH. IT'S ACTUALLY OVER THIS TIME. I swear, I never thought I would love Frostar so much. And her family and backstory. *squishes Frostar's cheek and gets clawed in the face* Anyway, thank you to all you readers who've been so wonderful and bombarded me with comments which I absolutely LOVE! Special thanks to CatStyles183 who was there at the very beginning and stuck with me until the very end. Thank you everyone!! Don't forget to look out for Fallowsong's Grief! I had some chapters prewritten, but I decided to scrap it and start the story anew.**